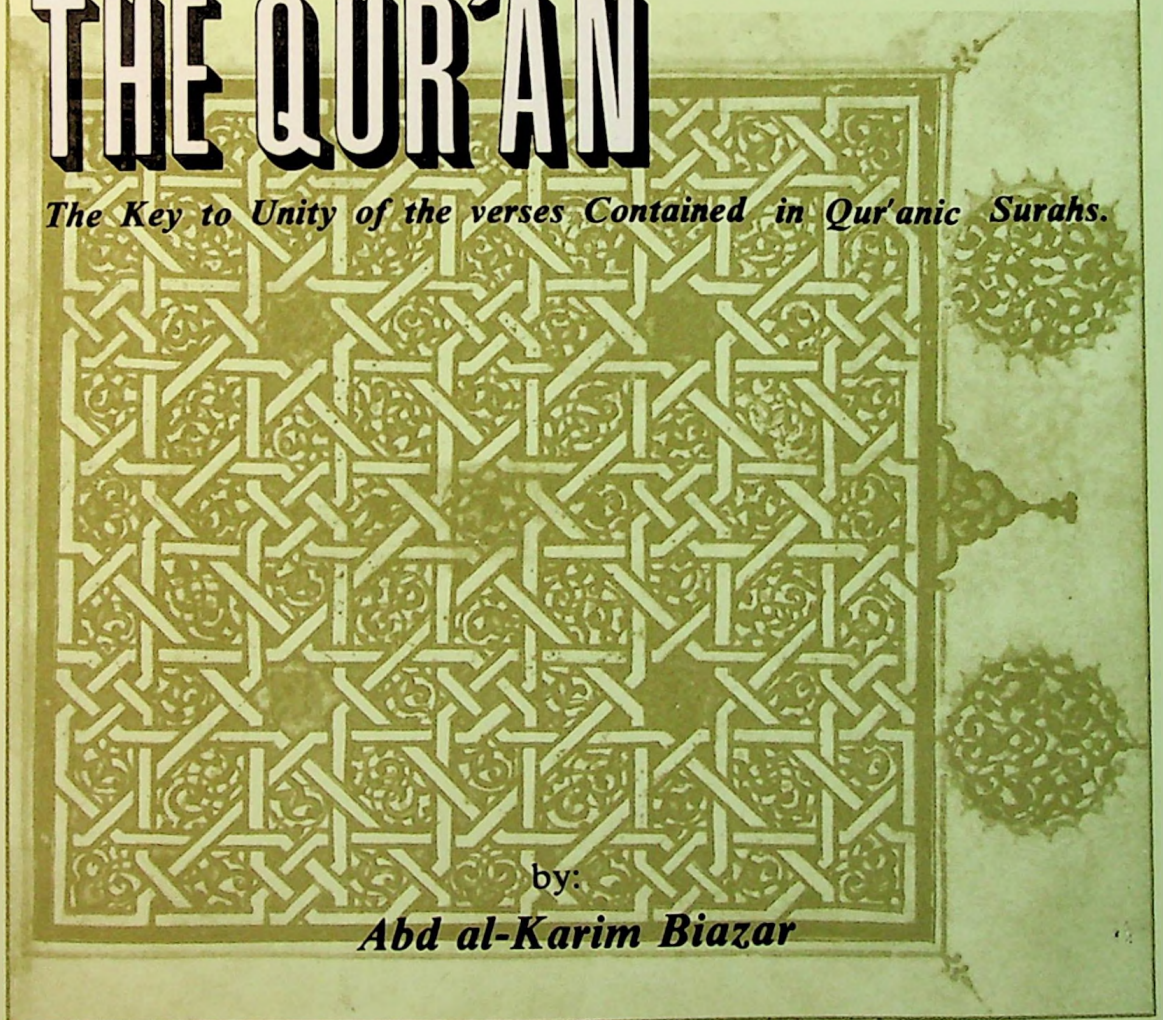
THE COVENANT IN THE QUR'ÂN

The Key to Unity of the verses Contained in Qur'anic Surahs.



by:

Abd al-Karim Biazar

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دفتر نشر فرهنگ اسلامی

OFFICE FOR DIFFUSION
OF ISLAMIC CULTURE
FERDOWSI AVENUE
TEHERAN - IRAN
Tel. 314302

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیم

معرفی این کتاب

(میثاق در قرآن)

موضوع این کتاب The Covenant in the Qur'an (میثاق در قرآن) است. قرآن همچون تورات و انجیل عهد و میثاقی میان خدا و انسانها است و از اینرو است که به تورات عهد قدیم و به انجیل عهد جدید و به قرآن عهد اخیر گفته می شود.[1]

و انسان با قبول دین و کتاب آسمانی و بیعت با پیامبران عهد و میثاق الهی را می پذیرد و تعهد می کند که به فرامین و شرایط پیمان و میثاق الهی عمل نماید و در برابر خداوند گذشته از نعماتی که تاکنون به انسان داده وعده فرموده که بندگان صالح و وفا کنندگان به عهد را وارث زمین گرداندو به تمدن و اقتدار برساند، و در آخرت پاداشهای نیکو و عظیمتری عطا فرماید.

و کسانی که عهد الهی را فراموش کرده از شیاطین پیروی کنند، برکات الهی تمدن و اقتدار از آنها گرفته شود و به کیفر و عذاب اخروی دچار گرداند.

۱. تفسیر فی ظلال القرآن سیدقطب، ج ۱ ص ۸۲.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

INTRODUCTION

An implicit assumption of the Qurān is that there exists an agreement between God and His creation. This agreement is portrayed as a mutual understanding. It is not a case in which God unilaterally imposes His wishes on man who is obliged to accept them to no special purpose or advantage. God proposes a system of regulations for the guidance of the life of man. This system is presented in the form of commandments to be accepted and implemented by man. God also makes certain promises of what He will do in the event of man's willingness to abide by these commands and regulates his life according to them. The concept of promise is clearly conditional on human obedience. The Covenant of Qur'an symbolizes that in relationship between God and man, the man becomes[1] His steward on the earth through submission and obedience to His Will as expressed in His commands - and is able to gain the advantage of God's promises and favours.

On the other hand, the concept of covenant also, symbolizes the relationship that exists between man and man, among God's creatures themselves.

They all share in one God, one system of regulations, and obedience to Him; and one set of expectations in accordance with His promises.

They can therefore trust each other since no special advantage is given to one over another. In the point of view of the Quran; the

life, civilization, and ascendancy of any nation or people will continue as long as they continue to fulfill God's Covenant.

The concept of «Covenant» is thus one of the key ideas of the Qurān.

The Qur'ānic Terms for Covenant

The Qurān uses different terms to express the concept of Covenant:

a. 'Ahd

This term, according to our understanding, has the following meanings: commitment, obligation, liability, responsibility, pledge, vow, promise, oath, contract, compact, covenant, pact, treaty, agreement, time, epoch, era.[1] This term occurs more frequently in the Qurān than the two following.[2]

b. Mithâq

The term «*mithâq*» originally meant a rope to tie up prisoners of war or animals.[3] The word *mithaq* is derived from the verb *wathaqa* which means: « to put faith in, to be sure.» So, « *mithâq*» is a tie of relationship between two contracting parties, to make them sure about their promises.

c. Iṣr

«Iṣr» literally means a firm covenant, compact, or contract; which if one does not fulfil, incurring Punishment if broken or neglected.[4] According to Raghib: «Isr means the emphasized *(mu'akkad) covenant which prevents the one who breaks it from (mu'akkad)* covenant which prevents the one who breaks it from receiving rewards and bounties.»[5] It is used in the Qur'ān as a weighty covenant which is stronger than the concept of *mithaq,,* e. g., in Surah 3:81.

The Method of Analysis

For better understanding of any particular Qur'ānic concept we can make use of six important approaches:

1. On the most basic lexical level, the interpretations of single

words with due attention to later semantic developments has been noted in connection with such words as *bay'ah,* which derives from the verb *ba'*a (to sell). The derivation shows that it is like a sale, or an exchange. We will use this method of lexical analysis in this book for expounding the different terms which the Qur'ān has used for the concept of covenant.

2. The Qur'ān itself has interpreted many terms and developed the concepts which they indicate, such as the term *mu'miniun* in Surah 23:8, which is defined as «those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants.» And in Surah 23:20 the Qur'ān interpreted *ulu al-albab* as those who fulfil the covenant of God and fail not in their plighted word *(al-mithaq).»*

3. As the Qur'ān was revealed to the Arabs of the seventh century[6] and as it insists on its *iblagh* and its *ibanah,* the history of ideas with reference to seventh-century Arabia could be helpful in explicating important terms and concepts. For this reason we will have a brief discussion about the Arab conception of covenant in pre-Islamic times and during the time of the Prophet.

4. Some approaches of the exegetists *(mufassirun)* are very helpful in understanding the chronology (ترتيب السور) and «occasions of revelation»(اسباب النزول)of the Qur'ānic verses, as well as many unclear verses. So, we will take help from some older and some more modern exegetists such as Tabarsi, Tabari, Tabatabai, Razi, Baydawi, Jalalayn, Abduh, Sayyid Qutb, M. Shaltut and others.

5. For better understanding of development of the idea of covenant in the Qur'ān, we should try to arrange the Surahs chronologically. As this has already been done for the Qur'ān, we should try to arrange the Surahs chronologically. As this has already been done for the Qur'ān as a whole, we will proceed in our investigation of ten different Surahs on the basis of the chronological order in which we believe these were revealed. Some, such as Surah 91, belong to the earlier Meccan period of the Prophet's career, while others such as: Surah 7, belong to the middle period of the revelation. And still others, such as Surah 5, come from the Medinan or final period.

6. Finally, as Irfan Shahid has observed in his article, «A Contribution to Kor'anic Exegesis,» in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of H.A.R. Gibb,* Harvard University Press, *1965/ P. 597.*

> The unity of the surah, if proven should be a valuable guide in exegesis. Kor'ānic exegesis has been plagued by what might be termed the microscopic approach which treats the single verse, not the whole surah, as a unit.[7] This approach has tended to obscure the significance or the amplitude of thought expressed in the surah. And it has also dimmed the light which the surah as one unit can shed on the interpretation of particular verses.

I would like to test this statement by considering the concept of covenant int he light of the unity of the whole surah where the concept is mentioned. This will be an effort at a new kind of Qur'ānic exegesis.

Thus, we can gain a better understanding of any particular Qur'ānic concept or of the meaning of unclear and ambiguous verses by examining a certain verse within the context of the whole and in relation to other surahs which speak about the same subject.[8] We propose to apply this method to the concept of covenant specifically, and suggest that by comparing the various verses which employ this term in the contexts of their surahs, we are enabled to better understand its real significance. Whatever light the Qur'ān itself may spread upon the concept of covenant,we hope to be able to give a clear picture of the Qur'ānic meaning of the term broadening the framework of previous research and investigation of this subject.

It should be noted here that, our starting point for this study is the assumption that the *ayat* of the Qur'ān were arranged in their present order and put in their present places by the Prophet himself; and not by his successors. Whenever he found a verse, (or several verses), that were not meant to be independent surahs; he would direct it (them) to the exact place where it was to be put in the surah of which it was to form a part. Then he used to recite the Qur'ān in that same order.[9] It has been assumed by many exegetists from earliest times that, the Qurān's component verses were arranged in the present order by the Prophet himself; and

this order was set once the revelation was complete.[10]

Our interest in this study is not linguistic, theological, or historical; but is rather an exploration of a theme and its form. We intend to examine the Qur'ānic concept of covenant by using different methods of interpretation. At the same time, it is our hope to be able to add further support to the thesis of the unity of the Qur'ān's surahs.

The Source

The Qur'ān is our chief source for this study.We have in all instances worked from the Arabic text; but the translations which we have quoted are from M.M. Pickthall, unless otherwise stated in the footnotes. We have also referred to various commentaries, such as: Tabari's (for comprehensive treatment of the sources for these interpretations), as we have often analyzed them by his superior point of view we have also drawen upon Baydawi's commentary as his has the advantage of being well-known among Orientalists.We have used Razi',,Abduh's,Tabatabai and Shaltut's commentaries since they have drawn attention to the importance of the unity of the Surahs.

In the same way the biographies of Muhammad may give suggestions for the background of certain passages. We have used the work of Ibn Ishaq *(al-Sirah)* when in need of biographical information.

For the meaning of the Arabic terms, which is an important element in the study of the Covenant and its context, we have often referred to E.W. Lane's dictionary and the *Maqa sid al-Lughah, Lisan al-Arab,* the *Mufradat* of Raghib and Taflisi's *Wujuh al-Qur'ān.*

The reader will doubtless know that there are frequent discrepancies in the citation of verse numbers from the various surahs of the Qur'ān. In the present study the majority of surahs and their verses are cited according to the numeration employed by Pickthall. In the event another system is referred to, especially in the footnotes and normallyin the course of direct quotation, we cite the verse number of Pickthall in brackets thereafter.

Formula

1. Edward William Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon* (London and Edinburg: William and Norgate, 1863), vol. 5, P. 2106. (Hereafter referred to as *Lexicon).*
2. It is used 46 times in the Qur'ān, while the term *mithaq* is used 26 times, and *isr* only twice. See Muhammad Fu'ad, Abd al-Baqi, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras LI-Alfaz al-Qur'ān* ([Cairo]: Dar wa Matabi, al-Sha'b, 1378 A.H.), pp. 492, 471, 34. (Hereafter referred to as *Mu'jam).*
3. Abu al-Fadl Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar Bayrut li al-Tiba, ah wa al-Nashr, 1375/1956), vol. 7, p. 53.
4. E.W. Lane, *Lexicon,* vol. 1, p. 63. It has this meaning, he says,in Surah2:282. But in Surah 3:75, he says it has the meaning of «a heavy, or burdensome, covenant, compact, or contract.» This is exactly what Raghib Isfahani says in the next footnote.
5. Raghib al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Ghara, ib al- Qur'ā*n (Karachi: n.p., 1380/1961), p. 17. (Hereafter referred to as *Mufradat).*
6. According to the Qur'ān itself (14:4)
7. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Abu Bakr al-Naysaburi, Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi, Burhan al-Din al-Biqa'i, Abu Ishaq al-Suyuti (see *al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'*an, 1st ed., 2 vols. [Cairo: al-Matba ah al-Azhariyah al-Misriyah, 1318 A.H.], vol. 2, p. 108). These are a few of the medieval exegetists who were aware of the problem of unity in the Qur'ānic surah and of its importance in exegesis, as is clear from the *Mafatih al-Ghayb.* The late Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut has drawn attention to the importance of the unity of the surah for understanding the Qur'ān, and has written his exegesis accordingly; see Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, *Tafsir al-Qur'ā*n al-Karim (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, 1960). (Hereafter referrred to as *Tafsir).*
8. Foı a successful exegetical attempt which has paid attention to the surah as a whole, see Alfred Guillaume,«The Meaning of Amaniya in Surah 2:73» in J. Kritzeck and B. Winder (ed.), *The World of Islam* (London: Macmill, 1959), pp. 41-46; see also H. Birkeland, «The Interpretation of Surah 107,» *Studia Islamica* (1958), pp. 13-29 and Muhammad 'Abd Allah Daraz, *Madkhal ila al-Qur'ā*n al-Karim, (Kuwayt: Dar al-Qur'ān al-Karim & Dar al-Qalam, 1971), pp. 114-118.
9. See al-Tabarsi, *Tafsir Majma, al-Bayan* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Lubnani, 1958), p. 19. Cf. al-Sayyid al-Murtada, *al-Muwaddih an Wajh I'jaz* al-Qur'*ān.*
10. Abul 'Ala, Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur'ā*n (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Jamaat-e Islami, 1968), p. 16.

CHAPTER 1

The Parties and Formulas for Covenant in the Qur'ān

I. The Parties and formulas for Covenant in the Qur'an

The Covenant in the Qur'ān usually contains several articles: 1) the party of the first part to the Covenant, 2) the party of the second part to the Covenant, 3) remembrance of God's favours, 4) list of commandments or conditions of the Covenant, 5) promises, 6) warning, 7)affirmation and witness, 8) oaths by God's signs and favours, 9) Signs of Covenant, 10) lessons from the past. For instance we can analyse the Covenant of the believers in Surah 5 with the above model as follows:

No.	Articles	Examples from the Qur'ān	S.V.
1.	*The party of the first part*	*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent*	*5*
2.	*The party of the second Part*	*O ye who believe;*	*5:1*
3.	*God's favours*	*Remember Allah's grace upon you and His Covenant...*	*5:7*

4.	*List of command-ments*	*Forbidden unto you (for food)are:1)carrion 2) and blood, 3) and swine-flesh, 4)and that which hath been dedicated unto any other than Allah,5) and the strangled, 6) and the dead... (see verses 1-6,8,37,41 53, 56, 59, 89, 90-92, 94, 95, 97, 102, 107, and 108)*	*5:3*
5.	*Promises*	*Allah hath promised those who believe and do good works: theirs will be forgiveness and immense reward*	*5:9*
6.	*Warning*	*And they who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, such are rightful owners of hell*	*5:10*
7.	*Witness*	*Remember... His covenant by which He bound you when ye said: «We hear and we obey.»*	*5:7*

8.	*Signs of Covenant*	*This day (Yawm al-haj al-akbar of hajjat al-wada' l) have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam.*	*5:3*
9.	*Lessons from the past*	*Allah made a Covenant of old with the Children of Israel... And because of their breaking their Covenant, We have cursed them and...(see also v.19-93)*	*5:12* *5:13*

In order to demonstrate the prominence which the concept of «Covenant» is given in the Qur'ān, we will examine in some detail each of the 10 articles or clauses of the Qur'ānic Covenant and illustrate each one with examples from various surahs. This will be followed by an analysis of Surah 7, using the Covenant model to provide an example of the unity of the surahs of the Qur'ān.

A. the party of the first part to the Covenant.

The Signs and the first party

Most of the time, the Covenant in the Qur'ān, is mentioned together with some passages concerning the signs of God; to prove God's existence and God's

promises. This article is important in the Divine Covenant, because man cannot see God and His promises in this world. For example, Surah 5 begins with God's signs, verses 1-6, and Surah 7, verses 54 to 58 provides another list.

Such as in Surah 30: after mentioning God's promises to help the believer to the victory, there is a list of signs as may be illustrat f by the following chart:

No.	Some Signs of God as a part of Covenant in Surah 30	S.V.
1.	Have they not pondered upon themselves?	30:8
2.	Allah created not the heavens and the earth	
3.	and that which is between them save with truth and for a destined...	
4.	He bringeth forth the living from the dead and He bringeth the earth after her death. And even so will ye be brought forth.	30:19
5.	And of His signs is this: He created you of dust and behold you human beings, ranging widely.	30:20
6.	And of His signs is this: He created for you help - mates from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, And He ordained between you love and mercy...	30:21 30:21
8.	And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth	30:22
9.	And the difference of your languages and colours.	30:22
10.	And of His signs is your slumber by night and by day,	30:23
11.	And your seeking of His bounty.	

12. And of His signs is this: He sendeth herald winds to make you teste His mercy, and that the ships may sail... 30:46

2. Attributes of the First Party

In most examples of the Covenant contained in the Qur'an we also find some of God's attributes. These were probably put at the beginning of the Covenant as a kind of introduction and to impress the reader with God's power as one who can do whatever He wishes; and to warn man of, how far the world must be mindful of His promises and warnings Also making aware of how much He knows and sees. And finally what are the reasons for this particular Covenant. For instance, in Surah 57 and many short surahs of the Qur'ān, the Covenant begins with God's signs and attributes. Following the passage about attributes and signs, there is a list of commandments followed by specific mentioning of the Garden and the Fire. The following chart is an example of God's attributes as given in Surah 57.

	1	... glorified Allah	57:1
	2	and He is the mighty	: 1
	3	The Wise	
I	4	His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth	: 2
	5	He quickeneth	
	6	and He giveth death;	
	7	and He is able to do all things	

	8	He is The First	57:3
	9	and The Last	
	10	and The Outward	
	11	and The Inward	
II	12	He is Knower of all things,	
	13	He it is Who created the heavens and the earth.	57
	14	He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah is Seer of what ye do	
	15	and He is knower of all that is in the breasts.	57
	16	What aileth you that ye believe not in Allah, when	57:8
III		the messenger calleth you to believe in your Lord (Rabb) and He hath already made a Covenant with you.	
	17	He it is Who sendeth down clear revelations	57: 9
	18	unto His slave that He may bring you forth from darkness unto light, and lo; for you, Allah is full of pity, Merciful.	
IV	19	And Allah is Informed of what ye do	57:10
	20	And Allah is of infinite bounty	57:21

IV	21	Allah is the Absolute,	: 24
	22	the Owner of praise	
	23	Allah is Strong,	: 25
	24	Almighty.	
		Allah is Forgiving,	: 28
	26	Merciful.	

We can divide these attributes into 4 sections:

I. The first section proves the ability of the first party to the Covenant to do as promised, and to prepare another world for the dead on the Day of Resurrection, where the good-doers will be rewarded and the evil doers will be punished.

The explanation Qur'ān provides regarding the Day of Resurrection is as follows: He who is able to create something like the heavens and the earth without reference to a pre-existing plan, is all the more able to bring back to life something which has already existed. And He who is the Mighty and the Wise and the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, and who quickeneth and gives death and is able to do all things; is able to give life to the dead.

II. The second section shows that God is not only the first party to the Covenant, but He also observes the Covenant as well.[2] For He is Knower of all things and all that is in the breast *(Ālim)*, and Seer of what we do *(Basir)*. And His information includes the past, present, and future, internal and external; for «He is the First *(al-Awwal)* and the Last *(al-Akhir)* and Outward *(al-Zāhir)* and Inward *(al-Bātin)*.

III. The third section shows that God created the heavens, the earth, and men. He has authority over men

and controls and educates them, for He is their Lord *(Rabb)*. In the standard dictionaries the word «*rabb*» means «to be master or lord, to have possession of, or control or authority over, someone or something.» Acording to Raghib al-Isfahani, it also means «creation, and education,» the idea of «making everything perfect gradually.»[3] In Surah 20:50, the term *rabb* is expressed as «He who gave each created things its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance.» So *rabb* contains the related notions of creation and the ownership that it implies, as well as education or guidance which the owner or master provides for his creation.

According to the eternal Covenant in Surah 7: 172, man accepted God as *rabb* for the reason that God sent the prophets to guide him. The idea is clearly stated in Surah 57: 8: «What aileth you that ye believe not in Allah, when the messenger calleth you to believe in your *Rabb,* and He hath already made a Covenant with you, if ye are believers?»

IV. The fourth section shows that God controls and educates us by sending down revelations, for He is full of pity and is Merciful (رؤف،رحيم). And He makes the Covenant not because He is in need of us or likes to be praised, nor because He is weak, but rather, because He is infinite in bounty (ذوالفضل العظيم), the Absolute (الغنى), the Owner of Praise (الحميد), He is Strong (قوى), Almighty, Forgiving, and Merciful (غفوررحيم).

So there is no doubt that He is true to His Covenant and «He never breaks His promise (ان الله لايخلف الميعاد)».[4]

B. The 2nd party to the Covenant

1. Adam

The story of Adam is mentioned in several surahs of the Qur'ān (38: 71-85, 7: 10-35, 17: 61-65, 15: 26-43, 18:50, 2: 30-39). An examination of these six surahs suggests that Adam in the Qur'ān does not refer to a single man in particular. Rather it seems to refer to the whole mankind, because in Surah 38:71-85 and Surah 15: 26-43, the word «*bashar*» (man) is the focus of the story; while in Surah 7: 10-35, as well as before and after surah 17: 61-65 and Surah 18:50, man is addressed in the plural. According to Muhammad Iqbal.

> ... the Qur'ān, by omitting the names of the persons and localities which tend to limit the meaning of a legend established a symbolic meaning. The object of the Qur'ān in dealing with these legends is seldom historical: it nearly always aims at giving them a universal, moral or philosophical import.»[5]

Thus the story of Adam in Qur'ān has both a general and a symbolic meaning. In Surah 20:115, the word Adam is used for «mankind» when discussing the

general Covenant between God and all mankind. In this context the term for Covenant is *'ahd*. Also, in Surah 2 the story of Adam is mentioned following the people who are called «*Fasiqin*», (those who break God's Covenant). This is followed by negation of the Covenants of Abraham and the children of Israel and a list of commands for the Covenant of Muslim believers.[6] In Surah as we will see, the story of Adam is mentioned as a general lesson concerning God's Covenant with the nations.[7]

2. *The Children of Adam*

Regarding God's Covenant with the children of Adam, the Qur'ān (7:172) has the following description:

> «When thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo! of this we were unaware; ur lest ye should say: (It is) only (that) our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were (their) seed after them. Wilt Thou destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did?».

This passage is probably the single most important verse for understanding the significance of the idea of Covenant in Qur'ān, because it receives different interpretations from various Muslim groups and commentators. We are going to review briefly different interpretations of the above verse:

a) Traditionalist (Ahl al-Hadith)

The traditionalist commentators say that: God struk Adam's back and extracted from his loin his whole posterity who would come into the world until the resurrection, one generation after another And that these men were actually put together in the shape of small ants which were endowed with understanding. After they had confessed their dependence on God in the presence of the angels, they were again caused to return into the loin of their great ancestor.[8]

b) The Ash'arites

Ash'arites like al-Hasan al-Basri and his companions, according to the above tradition, believe that children will be rewarded in Paradise for believing in God and accepting His Covenant in the later world *('Alam al-Dharr))*.[9]

c) The Mu'tazilites

The Mu'tazilites disagree with the Ash'arites' interpretation for several reasons: 1) Qur'ān stated: «when God drew forth from the children of Adam's loins,» (من ظهورهم ذرّيتهم) but the above tradition speaks about Adam himself. 2) The Qur'ān quotes the statement of the descendants of Adam, saying, «Our fathers before us may have taken false gods,» while Adam never took the false god. 3) This interpretation has the same problem as the transmigration of souls *(tanāsukh)*, because man does not remember his past, neither the day of *mīthāq,* nor the world before the transmigration of souls.[10] 4) How is it possible, as is claimed by the traditionalists and

the Ash'arites, for the whole human race, including every one who ever existed from the Creation to the Resurrection, to be compressed into a small unit the size of an ant, and then return into the loins of Adam? 5) According to the Ash'arites' interpretation we should have four worlds: A- *Alam al-Ḍarr,*[11] i.e., the world of essences, or the Day of Covenant *(Yawm al-Mithāq)*. B- This world. C- The world after death *(Barzakh)*. D- The world of resurrection; while the Qur'ān says that «there are two deaths and two lives for men» (Surah 40:11).

So they interpreted the above verse rationally and said that it refers to the miraculous creating of man before his birth, and we cannot deny that such a creation must have a creator. There is an analogy to the situation where God would ask man, «Am I your Lord?», and man would answer, «Yea!» The impossibility of denying this question is obvious, even if there was no response in fact.[12]

d) Abu al-Futuh Razi

According to Abu al-Futuh Razi, the term «*dhurriya-tahum*» in the above verse was misunderstood by many exegetes. They thought that it was from the word «*dharari*» which means children. For this reason they imagined another world before creation, while the term «*dhurriyah*» has a more general meaning since it is used in Surah 13: 20-23 for adults: «... Those who fulfil the Covenant of God... for such there are... Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring *(dhurriyatihim).*» It is clear that the term «righteous» *(saluha)* cannot be used for children.[13]

So we may say that the descendants of Adam did

not acknowledge or bear witness to their Lord before their creation, but rather after their birth when they could hear, see, and use their intellect, and observe themselves as the Qur'an 16:78 says: «Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing and gave you hearing and sight and heart...»

It was after birth that God appointed to men hearing and sight and hearts (the Qur'ān 32:9) and showed them His signs. If in that situation God asks them «Am I not your Lord», they will reply «yea» by their natures and their intellect, not by their tongue. The following verse 7:189 (see below, pp. 97-29) shows this idea more clearly.

e) Spiritual Interpretation

Some learned Sunnis, such as Ishaq b. Rahim and Abu Hurayra,[14] some learned Shi'd such as Ibn Babawayhi and Shaykh Mufid,[15] and most Sufis, such as Ibn al-'Arabi, believe in the first, or spiritual creation *(al-khalq al-awwal),* and that God created the spirit of people and made a Covenant with them before the creation of the body.[16] Ibn al-'Arabi says:

> «Adam is the unique spirit *(al-nafs al-wahidah)* from which was created the human species, (according to the Qur'ān, 4:1). This unique spirit was created before the body of the spirit of man and was endowed with intelligence. Because of this, he took up the challenge of God's invitation and agreed to be the servant of his Lord *(Rabb),* accepting this covenant answering «Yea,[17] we testify» (قالوا بلى).»[18]

The Document

The Covenant of Adam's children is completed in this way:

1. We acknowledge that God is our Creator, Cherisher and Sustainer.[19]
2. Therefore we acknowledge our duty to Him.[20]
3. There is no excuse for any individual to say either that he was heedless *(ghafil)*, or that he was a follower of his father's sin.
4. Imitation (taqlid)is false when the proof is present, and everyone who can reach the proof should not follow others.
5. God will punish those who associate false gods with God, for their personal responsibility and for their own rejection of faith, not for the sins of their fathers.

The following verses express the concept of the *Ghāfilin* (heedless), *Rabb* (God's guidance) and *Shirk* (association):

Heedless (Ghafilin)

Verse 179 of the same surah (Surah 7) describes the concept of *ghafilin:* «they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless *(ghāfilin).*»

Rabb (God's guidance)

Then verses 178 and 180-181 express the meaning of *Rabb,* God's guidance or education which was

mentioned in verse 172. According to the Qur'ān 20:50, «When Pharaoh asked, 'Who then, O Moses, is your *Rabb?*' Moses said: 'Our *Rabb* is He who gave each created thing its form and nature and further, gave (it) guidance.'» According to Raghib the term «*Rabb*» means education and creation, making everything perfect gradually. God is absolute *Rabb*[21] Man, by the eternal Covenant, accepted God as his sustainer, and he should follow certain practices, such as worshipping, in order to approach perfection and make himself fit to God's attributes.

By praying to God and invoking His names which describe His attributes, man comes nearer to God's attributes and becomes the representative of God on earth. Therefore, we read in verses: 180-181:

> Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them. And leave the company of those who blaspheme His names. They will be requited for what they do. And of those whom we created there is a nation who guide with the Truth and establish justice therewith.

Shirk

In the verses that follow, from 189 to 198, the Qur'an explains that it is in the nature of man to forget about his Covenant with God, to become careless about *tawhid,* and gradually to associate other gods or partners with God.

The Covenant of Man During Hardships

> «He it is who did create you from a single soul, and therefrom did make his mate that he might

> take rest in her. And when he covered her, she bore a light burden, and she passed (unnoticed) with it, but when it become heavy they cried unto Allah, their Lord, saying: if thou givest unto us aright we shall be of the thankful. But when He gave unto them ought, they ascribed unto Him partners in respect of that which He had given them. High is He, exalted above all that they associate (with Him). (Surah 7: 189-190).

Most exegetes believe that this passage refers to Adam and Eve.[22] On the basis of this interpretation the question arose as to how they became idolaters, idolatry being a cardinal sin.[23]

We doubt that this passage refers only to Adam and Eve as individuals. It refers to all mankind as such.[24] According to Sayyid Qutb· the modern commentator, this passage shows symbolically how the nature of men and women is to shift away from the unity of God to idolatry. It is like a couple who marry with the love which God gave them (Surah 31: 21), and by their nature expect a goodly child (good in body, mind, and moral disposition). After their union she becomes pregnant, and when she reaches her time, in the throes of delivery, they both pray to God, their Lord and make a Covenant with Him that «if thou givest us a goodly child, we shall be grateful.» But after their child is born, they forget that it was a precious gift of God,which should lift their minds up to the higher things of God. Instead, their gradual familiarity with the new life makes them connect with many superstitious ideas, or rites and ceremonies, or they take it as a matter of course, as a little play thing of the material world. This leads to idolatry or false worship.

The nature of man, which guides him to God, is awakened in times of hardship or danger, such as the trial of childbirth, or a storm at sea. In this situation man forgets all material things which he ascribed to God as partners and remembers the One True God and (in his heart) makes a Covenant with Him. But he relapses into his own fancies when the danger is past.

Comparison with Other Verses

There are a number of similiar verses which elaborate a Covenant further on this interpretation. For instance, Surah 17:67, «And when harm toucheth you upon the sea, all unto whom ye cry (for succour) fail save Him (alone), but when He bringeth you safe to land, ye turn away, for man was ever thankless.» In Surah 29:65, 30:33, man gives a share in his worship to other deities when he is safely back on land. In Surah 9:75 some people make a Covenant with God when they are poor, but forget all about it when they grow rich.

So verses 189-190 have a relationship to verses172-3 which came before them,[25]and both of them discuss the nature of a man who believes in the unity of God, but the material life converts his pure nature and makes him associate other gods with God, or forget Him; especially in dangers, hardship, and when the child is yet unborn, the parents in their anxiety turn to God, and make a Covenant with Him. In the same surah the story of Pharaoh and his people, from verse 134 to 135, is an example of the nature of man in times of hardship:

> «And when the terror fell on them they cried: O Moses! Pray for us unto thy Lord, because He

> hath a covenant with thee. If thou removest the terror from us we verily will trust thee and will let the Children of Israel go with thee. But when We did remove from them the terror for a term which they must reach,behold; they broke their covenant. »

3. The Prophets

In Surah 3:81 God made a Covenant with all the prophets that in return for His giving them Scripture *(Kitab)* and wisdom *(hikmah),* they would promise that when a messenger came confirming what they had from Him they would believe in him and aid him.[26] That was the condition on which they were to take up their task, and when they assented; God promised that He would be with them.[27]

Surah 3:84 expresses the idea that Muhammadﷺ is the one who comes «confirming» what was sent to the earlier messengers.

Surah 3:85 expressly links this passage with his religion of Islam. Moreover, Surah 3:68 shows that Muhammadﷺ is the answer to the prayer of Abrahamع[28] in his Covenant with God in Surah 2:129:

> «... our Lord, raise up in their midst a messenger from among them (our seed) who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture *(Kitab)* and in wisdom *(hikmah)*[29] and shall make them grow.»

Since Muhammadﷺ is in the Abrahamic succession (Surah 3:68), he is the one who has the «*Kitab*» and

«*hikmah*» who has come to purify them (people). (Surah 3:163).

Sharing the Earlier Messengers' Covenants

Surah 3:84 made Muhammad ﷺ and his followers participants in the Covenant which God made with earlier prophets and their people. This verse is in the form of a Covenant since He commands Muhammad and his followers to affirm that:

> «...we believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was vouchsafed unto Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.»[30] (Surah 3:84).

In Surah 42:13 it says:

> « He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended *(wassa)* unto Noah, and that which we inspire in thee (Muhammad),and that which we commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus. »

I think these are considered to be the same in the fundamental aspect of religion *(din)*. For instance, Surah 6: 152-159 renews the ten commandments of Moses and says:

« Come, I will recite unto you that which your Lord hath made a sacred duty for you:

1. That ye ascribe nothing as partner unto Him,
2. and that ye do good to parents,
3. and that ye slay not your children ...
4. and that ye draw not nigh to lewd things whether open or concealed,
5. and that ye slay not life which Allah hath made sacred, ...
6. and approach not the wealth of the orphan save with that which is better,
7. Give full measure and full weight, in justice,
8. We task not any soul beyond its scope,
9. And if ye give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman,
10. and fulfill the Covenant of Allah.

This He commandeth you that haply ye may remember, and this is My straight path, so follow it. »

Surah 7, as we will see, makes the Muslim believers participants in earlier Covenants and addresses them under the Covenant of Adam, children of Adam, and others.

Islam as a Covenant of the Prophets

Islam is seen as a Covenant between God and the Prophets, Adam (Surah 64:16), Noah (Surah 10:71), Abraham (Surah 2:131), Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob (Surah 2:132), Jacob's sons (Surah 2:133), Joseph (Surah 12:110), Moses (Surah 10:84), Jesus and his disciples (Surah 3:52), and Muhammad (Surah 22:78, 5:3).

The term «Islam» derives from the Arabic verbal root *salima,* which means «to be safe and sound, secure, peaceful and obedient.»[31]

According to the Qur'ān, Islam means «submission to God's will» (Surah 3:20, 83), «to bow and obey» (Surah 39:54). It is associated with *ihsān,* «beneficence,charity,performance of good deeds»(Surah 4:125), *ikhlās*, «sincere devotion, frankness» (Surah 12:11), *tawakkul,* «***trust in God***». Islam is used as the opposite of *kufr,* «unbelief, infidelity,» in Surah 3: 80, and the opposite of *shirk,* «idolatry» in Surah 5:14. So, Islam is God's religion in all ages, and His Covenant with the prophets. And the messenger who came declaring that earlier messengers were truth, is part of the continuity of Revelation.

The Prophetic Responsibility

The Qur'ān, 7:6 mentions that the messengers are responsible. The following items illustrate this prophetic responsibility:

1. Belief in God
2. Submission to God's will 2:136
3. Conforming and believing in what was sent down to the last Prophet. 2:135
4. Making no distinction between any of the Prophets. 2:136
5. Bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after. 3:81
6. Recitation of God's revelations. 2:151
7. Purifying of the people. 2:151
8. Teaching the Scripture. 2:151
9. Teaching «*Hikmah*» (wisdom). 2:151
10. Teaching that which people knew not. 2:151
11. Desiring people to think. 16:44

12. Obstructing people from following the past blindly. 43:23
13. Giving good news to whomever will hear advice and follow the best. 39:18
14. Judgement between people by the divine law. 5:45
15. Establishing unity between people. 2:213
16. Desiring mankind to do justice. 57:25
17. Delivering the message obviously.[33] 5:92
18. We have sent thee as a witness (شاهداً), 48:8
19. and bearer of good tidings (ومبشراً). 48:8
20. and a warner (ونذيراً). 48:8

4. The Nations

The fourth group of the 2nd party of the Divine Covenant are the people of the Prophets, those who accept God as *Rabb* (cherisher and sustainer) and fulfil His Covenant. They are called, in the Qur'ān, by the following names:

No.	The Properties	The Verses of the Qur'ān	Surah verse
1.	*al-Mu'minun*	Successful indeed the believers ...who are shepherds of their Covenant.	23:1-7
2.	*al-Muttaqun*	... he who fulfilleth his pledge and wardeth off (evil) for lo, Allah loveth those who ward off (evil) (المتقون)	3:76
3.	*al-Musallin*	... save worshippers... those who keep their pledges and their Covenant.	70:22

4.	*'Ulu al-Albab*	... but only men of understanding heed;such as keep the pact of Allah, and break not the Covenant.	13:19
5.	*al-Birr*	... but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and ... and those who keep their treaty when they make one.	2:177

Those who rejected God's Covenant or broke it are called in the Qur'ān by the following names:

No.	The Properties	The Verses of the Qur'ān	Surah Verse
1.	*al-Fasiqin*	... He misleadeth only miscreants; those who break the Covenant of Allah after ratifying it.	2:26
2.	*al-Kafirin*	Lo; the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are ungrateful who ... break their treaty.	8:55 8:56
3.	*al-Mushrikin*	How can there be a treaty with Allah and with His messenger for the idolators ...	9:7
4.	*al-Zalimin*	... He said: My covenant includeth not wrongdoers	2-124

5.	*Sharr al-Dawab*	Lo; the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are... who break their treaty and they keep not their duty.	8:55

In the point of view of the Qur'ān, the life, civilization, and ascendancy of any nation or people will be continued as long as they continue to *fulfill* God's Covenant (Surah 21:105, 11:117, 7: 94-102)

Introduction to the Nations

The Covenants of the nations in the Qur'ān usually are mentioned in conjunction with a number of epithets for the various groups. Surah7 uses different epithets to introduce the different groups and various nations and to show the cause of their failure or success, as follows:

No.	The Properties	Those Possessed of the Property	Surah Verse
1.	*The believers (al-Mu'minun)*	1. The Muslims 2. Moses	7:2 7:143
2.	The successful *(al-Muflihiun)*	The Muslims	7:8
3.	*Muslimin*	The sorcerers who believed in the Lord of noses Pharaoh said to them: «I will cause you all to die on the cross,» but they submitted themselves to God's will.	

4.	*The righteous (al-Muttaqin)*	For who seek help in Allah and endure.	7:128
5.	Good doers *(al-Muhsinin*	Who work not confusion in the earth.... and call on Him in fear and hope.	7:56
6.	The righteous *(Ṣalihin)*	Muslim believers.	7:196
7.	*Those who tell the truth (Ṣadiqin)*	For Noah	7:66
8.	The prostrate *in adoration (Sājidin)*	For angels who bow to Adam and the sorcerers who fell down before Moses's miracle.	7:11
9.	Those who were reckoned powerless *(Mustaḍafin)*	For the people of Moses among Pharaoh's people.	7:137
10.	Seer *(Mubsirin)*	For those who ward off (evil), when a glamour from the devil troubleth them they do but remember (Allah's guidance).	7:201
11.	Those who give thanks *(Shākirin)*	For Moses	7:144

12.	Companions of the en- *(al-Janna)*	For those who believe and work righteousness.	7:42

No.	The Properties	Those Possessing such Properties	S.V.
1.	The disobedient *(al-Fasiqin)*	For the people who do not keep their Covenant.	7:102
2.	The unbelievers *(al-Kafirin)*	For the people of Madyan	7:92
3.	The wasters *(al-Musrifin)*	For the people of Lot	7:81
4.	Those who trespass beyond bounds *(al-Mu'tadin)*	For people in general.	7:55
5.	The liars *(al-Kadhibin)*	For the people of Madyan.	7:66
6.	The criminals (sinners) *(al-Mujrimin)*	1. For those who reject God's signs and scorn them. 2. For the people of Lot.	7:40 7:103
7.	The mischief (makarin)	*1. For the people of madyan* *2. For pharaoh and his chiefs*	
8.	The meanest *(al-Saghirin)*	1. For Satan. 2. For Pharaoh and his chiefs.	7:13 7:119

9.	The arrogant ones *(Mustakbirin)*	1. For Satan.	7:13
		2. For the people of Thamud.	7:75
10.	The oppressors *(al-Zalimin)*	1. For the nations who broke the Covenant.	7:4
		2. For Adam who approached the tree.	7:19
		3. For those who denied God's relation and scorn them.	7:41
		4. For those who would hinder (men) from the path of God.	7:45
		5. For those who denied the Hereafter	7:45
		6. For Jews who worshipped a calf.	7:148
11.	The blind people *('Amin)*	For the people of Noah. Those who rejected God's signs.	7:64
12.	The heedless *(Ghafilin)*	Those who have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not.	7:64

Two Contrary Groups of Nations

In the Qur'ān we find evidence for the identification of two opposite groups of nations who are described in relation to the Covenant of (Man's) Stewartship. They are:

1. Companions of the Garden (Heaven).
2. Companions of the Fire (Hell).

Surah.Verse.		The Properties	The Properties		Surah.Verse.
7:2	المؤمنين	The believers.	The unbelievers	الكافرين	7:92
7:125	المسلمين	Who bow to God's will	The disobedient	الفاسقين	7:102
7:65	المتقين	Those who fear God	The wasters	المسرفين	7:31-81
7:128	المتقين	Those who fear God	Those who trespass beyond bounds	المعتدين	7:55
7:70	الصادقين	Those who tell the truth	The liars	الكاذبين	7:66
7:56	محسنين	Those who do good	The criminals (Sinners)	المجرمين	7:40-84
7:196	صالحين	The righteous	The mischief makers	مفسدين	7:86,103
7:11,120	ساجدين	The prostrate in adoration	The meanest	صاغرين	7:13,119
7:144	شاكرين	Those who give thanks	The arrogant on ones	مستكبرين	7:75
7:137	مستضعفين	Those who were recked powerless	The transgressors	الظالمين	7: 4, 9, 41, 46, 148
7:201	مبصرين	Those who see	Blind people	عمين	7:63-182
7:201	مبصرين	Those who see (aright)	The heedless	غافلين	7:136-171
7:3-157	مفلحين	The prosperous	The lost, ruined	خاسرين	7:23
7:42	اصحاب الجنة	Companions of the Garden (Heaven)	Companions of the Fire (Hell)	اصحاب النار	7:36

The studying of these properties along with the whole Surah shows that in due course most nations forget the Covenant they have made with God. They become disobedient and unbelieving *(al-kafirin)*, gradually reverting to a purely material life. Of sin *(Mujrimin)*, mischief *(Mufsidin)*, and transgression *(Zalimin)*. God sends his guidance to these disobdient people. But most of them reject the truth *(al-Kadhibin)*. They imagine that they are superior because they see themselves distinguished from others in material wellbeing *(Mustakbirin)*. They think they have more money and more power; but, in fact they are weak, mean *(al-Saghirin)*, heedless *(Ghafilin)* and blind *(Amin)*. They have a false sense of economics, because, they are cheating each other and will end up in ruin *(al-Khasirin)*. They waste their bodies and wealth in eating, drinking, and fancy wearing. And indulge in shameful behaviours. They are the conspicuous consumers, the waste-makers *(al-Musrifin)* who will no doubt bring about their own downfall and destruction and will become Companions of the Fire (Hell).

Just as the Companions of the Fire suffer their decline and fall, so the Companions of the Garden experience a rise in their fortunes. Although they are powerless *(Mustadafin)*, they are nonetheless very strong. For they trust each other, they have faith *(Mu'minin)*, and they are clear-sighted *(Mubsirin)*. They are always trying to improve themselves by worshiping God and recalling His attributes. So, they will become prosperous *(Muflihin)* and Companions of the Garden *(Ashab al-Jannah)*. [34]

5. *The Children of Israel*

There are many verses in the Qur'ān concerning the Children of Israel's Covenant with God in different situations. Some of them are mentioned as lessons from the past to make the Muslim believers participants in their Covenant, as we will see in Surah 7. And some of them are mentioned as a reminder to the Jews of the time to renew their old Covenant. For example, Surah 5 speaks about one of the Jewish Covenants, as follows:

No.	Articles		S.V.
1.	*The lst party*	Allah made a Covenant of old with...	5:12
2.	*The2nd party*	The children of Israel.	
3.	*God's favours*	1) We raised among them twelve children. 2) Allah said: I am with you.	5:12
4.	*Conditions*	If ye 1) establish worship 2) and pay the poor-due 3) and believe in My messengers 4)and support them, 5) and lend unto Allah a kindly loan (without interest),	5:12
5.	*Promises*	1) surely I shall remit your sins, 2)surelyI shall bring you into gardens underneath which rivers flow.	5:12

6.	*Warning*	Whoever among you disbelieveth after this[35] will go astray from a plain road.	5:12
7.	*Punishment*	And because of their breaking their Covenant, we have cursed them and made hard their hearts.	5:13

The Situation

According to Baydawi *(Anwār al-Tanzil,* P. 143): «After the Israelites had escaped from Pharaoh, God ordered them to go against Jericho which was inhabited by giants of the race of the Canaanites; promising to give it into their hands. And Moses, by the divine direction, appointed a prince or a captain over each tribe to lead them in that expedition. When they came to the borders of the land of Canaan, he sent the captains as spies to get information of the state of the country; enjoining to them secretly, being terrified at the prodigious size and strength of the inhabitants, that disheartened the people by publicly telling what they had seen, except only Caleb the son of Yafunna (Jephunneh), and Joushua the son of Nun.»[36]

Breaking the Covenant

The Qur'ān mentions the Covenants of the Jewish people as examples, and what are the consequences of breaking the Covenant: «And because of breaking their Covenant, we have cursed them and made hard their hearts.»[37]

6. *The Covenant of the Christians*

There are also some verses in the Qur'ān concerning the Covenant with the Christians. Most references to the Christian's Covenant are in Surah 5, as follows: «From those, who call themselves Christians, we did take a Covenant.»

No.	Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	S.V.
1.	*The 1st party*	God	
2.	*The 2nd party*	Jesus and his people	5:15
3.	*God's favours*	... Remember my favour... 1) the Holy Spirit 2) speaking in the cradle. 3) teaching the Scripture, wisdom, Torah and the Gospel, 4) shaping of clay as a bird, 5) healing the blind and the leper, 6) bringing forth the dead 7) restraining the Jews from you.8) table set (spread with food).	5:110 5:115
4.	*List of commandments*	1) ... We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the	5:48

		Law that had come before him: 2) We sent him a Gospel:therein is guidance and light. 3)Let the people	5:50
		of the Gospel judge by what God hath revealed therein... 4) Why do not	5:63
		Rabbis and the doctors of law forbid them from uttering sinful words and eating forbidden food? 5) Christ said: Worship	5:72
		Allah, my Lord and your Lord. 6) Stress not in your religion, 7) Nor follow the vain desires of folk who went wrong... 8)	5:77 5:80
		Forbid one another the iniquities... 9) Take not unbelievers for your friends.	
5.	*Promises*	... and Christians whosoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right here shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. Allah saith: This is a day in	5:69 5:119
		which their truthfulness profiteth the truthful, for theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they are secure forever,Allah taking plea-	

		sure in them and they in Him. That is the great triumph.	
6.	*Warning*	And whoso disbelieveth of you afterward, him surely will I punish with a punishment wherewith I have not punished any of (My) creatures.	5:115
7.	*Lesson from the past*	Those of the children of Israel who went astray were cursed by the tongue of David, and of Jesus, son of Mary.	5:78

7. *The Learned Men (*Ulamā*)*

a. The Rabbis and the Priests

The Qur'ān, in Surah 3:187 and 7:109, mentions some details about God's Covenants with the rabbis and priests. Surah 5, verses 44 to 80, gives one of these Covenants in full. The following chart will illustrate its terms:

No.	Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	Surah.Verse.
1.	The 1st party	God	3:187
2.	The 2nd party	The rabbis and priests.[38]	5:44

3.	God's favours.	Revelation of the Torah as guidance and a light by which the Prophets,rabbis and the priests judged the Jews by such of Allah's Scripture as they were bidden to observe.	5:44
4.	List of commandments.	1) Fear not mankind but fear Me	5:44
		2) Batter not My revelations for a little gain.	5:44
		3) Judge by what God has revealed	5:44
		4) Do forbid people's evil-speaking and their devouring illicit gain.	5:63
		5) Stress not in your religion other than the truth.	5:77
		6) Follow not the vain desires of folk.	5:77
5.	Promises	If only the people of the Scripture would believe and ward off (evil), surely 1) We should remit their sins. 2) and bring them into Garden of Delight. 3)	5:65
		If they had observed the Torah and Gospel and that which was revealed unto them from their Lord, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath their feet.	5:66

6.	Warning	Say:O people of the Scripture! Ye have naught till ye observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto you from your Lord. ... Many of them making friends with unbelievers... Allah will be wroth with them and in the doom they will abide.	5:68 5:80
7.	Lesson from the past	«Those of the children of Israel who went astray were cursed by the tongue of David ...	5:78
8.	Witness	The rabbis and the priests by such of Allah's Scripture as they were bidden to observe, and thereunto were they witnesses.	5:44

b. The Disciples

The Covenant between God and the disciples is described as follows:

No.	Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	S.V.
1.	The 1st party	And when I inspired	5:111
2.	The2nd party	The disciples:	5:111
3.	List of Commandments	1) Believe in Me, 2) and in My messenger.	5:111

4.	Witness	They said: We believe(bear witness)that we have surrendered (unto Thee).	5:111
5.	Sign	The disciples asked a table spread with food from heaven (as a sign).	5:112
6.	Warning	Allah said: I send it down for you. And whoso disbelieveth of you afterward him surely will I punish with a punishment where with I have not punished any of (My) creatures.	5:115
7.	Promises	... Allah saith: this is a day in which their truthfulness profiteth the truthful, for theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow...	5:119

8. The Faithful Men

The Covenant of the Muslim believers is the main part of the Qur'ān; for this reason we should make respectively greater effort to understand this part. As the Qur'ān was revealed to the Arabs of the seventh century; we should first take a look at the custom of the Arabs in pre-Islamic times and in regards to pacts. We should also endeavour to ascertain how the Qur'ān changed these pacts in Islam. Then we can consider the Covenant of the believing men and women with God, through the Prophet.

Covenant in Pre-Islaimc Times

Keeping pacts and agreements was very important for the Arabs before Islam, and it represented a strong bond among people and tribes. Pre-Islamic pacts were of these kinds:

1. *Jawār* (refugee).The person who was excommunicated from his tribe took refuge with another tribe. The leader of the new tribe could, however, break the Covenant at any time.[39]
2. *Walā,* (friendship), which consisted of an individual who wished to bind himself to a clan by an agreement with one of the members of this clan. By means of this agreement two Arabs became equals in every aspect of life including inheritance.[40] This custom continued into early Islamic times.[41]
3. *Tahāluf,*(confederation) between a person and a tribe or between two tribes as in *Hilf al-Fudul,*[42] *Hilf al-Mutayyabin,*[43] and the pacts of the Jews of Medina with the tribes of Aws and Khazraj which continued after Islam, according to the Qur'ān, 59:11.

How the Qur'ān Changed the Custom of the Arabs Regarding Pacts

When Islam arose, Muhammad ﷺ successfully used these strong relationships to join different tribes and people together, but he changed them in the following ways:

1. He accepted the *Jawār* (refugee) according to the Qur'ān, 9:6, «... so that he may hear the word of God.»
2. He changed the customs of «*Walā*» to the Covenant of brotherhood *(Mu'akhat)* as in Surah 8:75. Then he

cancelled the inheritance of the *wala* as an obligation, but allowed it in the form of a gift according to the Qur'ān, 33:6.

3. He replaced the custom of *Tahāluf* (confederation) with *Mithaq* (Divine Covenant), and said: «There is no *hilf* in Islam.»[44]

The following chart shows how confederation was changed into the Divine Covenant:

No.	Subject	*Tahaluf* (Confederation.)	*Mithaq* (Covenant)
1.	Kind of society	Tribalism	Islamic (Q. 5:3)
2.	Kind of society	Nationalism	Religious community *(Ummah wahidah* (Q. 21:92
3.	Protector	False deities (Q. 21: 257).	Allah (Q. 2:257)
4.	The bond	Zeal *(Hamiyah Jahiliyah* (Q. 48:25)	The faith and belief in God and next life
5.	The object	Mostly *tahaluf* in the *Jahiliyah* was for raiding purposes.[45]	Peace and justice, and holy war (Q. 2 :190-194).
6.	The power	was usually for leaders and nobles.	Is for all members equally (Q. 49:13)

7.	The respect	Was usually for leaders and nobles.	of individual is the same as the leader and group (Q. 5:35)
8.	The members	...Are different people and tribes.	... are all mankind who accept Islam or believe in God and resurrection (Q. 2:62).
9.	The custom	Usually formed in front of idols	«Covenant with the Prophet was in fact covenant with God» (Q. 48: 10)
10.	For the *Bay'ah* or oath of allegiance	They used to shake each other's hand	«The Hand of God is over their hands.»(Q., 48: 10)

Covenant in the Time of the Prophet ﷺ

a. The Covenant of 'Agabah:

The commentators of the Qur'an 5:7, «Remember God's grace toward you and His Covenant which He made with you when you said, 'we hear and we obey,'» found the possibility of a specific reference here to the Covenant of 'Aqabah or the contract of Ridwan.[47] Some European scholars have suggested that it refers to the contract at 'Aqabah.[48]

Actually, several events are mentioned by the biographers of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as occasions

when his followers contracted their support to him in a manner which could be described as a «Covenant of God». In this section we will investigate these events:

'Aqabah is a valley between Medina and Mecca. It is famous in Islamic history because it was there that the first Medinans accepted Islam, heard Muhammad ﷺ and swore to support him. This support led to the migration of the Meccan Muslims to Median. It has been called «the beginning of Islam.»[49]

Ibn Ishaq spreads the events among three meetings. In 620-622 A.D. Muhammad ﷺ first met six men of the Khazraj tribe, who concluded that Muhammad ﷺ was the Prophet of whom their Jewish neighbours had spoken, and accepted him, and after returning to Medina convinced a number of their fellow townsmen.[50]

The following year twelve men from Medina, representing both the Khazraj and Aws tribes, came to Muhammad ﷺ. They made a Covenant with him. The terms of the Covenant forbade: 1) idolatry; 2) thievery, 3) fornication, 4) childmurder, 5) slander, and 6) disobedience to Muhammad in what was proper. Paradise was the reward for fulfillment of the Covenant. Its violation was for God to punish or forgive as He pleased. The Prophet sent Mas'ab ibn 'Umayr with them to Medina to teach them Islam and the Qur'ān.[51] The biography of Muhammad refers to this Covenant at 'Aqaba as «the Bond of the Women,» which is described in the Qur'ān 60:12. Although this verse is connected with an occasion which comes much later it could have existed as an early commandment list associated with the Covenant, brought into use primarily with Women's Covenant and then been called «the Bond of the Women.»

In the following year, 73 men and two women met the Prophet ﷺ at 'Aqabah. They made a Covenant with him that they would protect him the same as they would their spouses and children.They were promised Paradise.

The terms of this Covenant were: 1) they pledged to make war on the infidels under Muhammad's orders, 2) not to wrong anyone, 3) to speak the truth, and 4) to be unmoved from serving God by fear of censure.[52] According to the report,Sa'd B. Mu'adh replied that they had given their Covenant to hear and obey (سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا). So, we may say that the above verse (Surah 5: 7, i.e., «... and His Covenant which He made with you when you said, 'we hear and we obey,'»), particularly refers to the Covenant of 'Aqabah and this may have been recognized from the beginning. It generally includes all Muslims, for it is well-known that in the earliest times practically no one could join the new religion without swearing, at the same time, allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ (baya'ahu 'ala al-Islam). The sense of «we hear and we obey» is the concept of Islam (submission). It seems that it was used on that occasion for bearing witness to the Covenant.

b. The Pledge of Ridwan

The Qur'ān speaks of this Covenant directly as follows:

> «Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance (*Sakinah*) on them, and hath rewarded them with a near victory: And much booty that they will capture. Allah is ever Mighty, Wise.[53] »

This Covenant is described as the «Pact of Ridwan (Pleasure)» in the above cited verse.[54]

The verb used here in the Qur'ān to express the action that took place under the tree is *yubayi'unaka* («they swore allegiance to you»). This verb is used twice in the same Surah, 48:10, once related to Muhammaﷺ, and once to God. It refers to this same event under the tree.

The relationship to God is described in the Qur'ān 9:111:

> «Lo Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs... It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'ān. Who fulfilleth His Covenant better than Allah? Rejoice then in your bargain that ye have made (*bi-bay'ikum alladhi baya'tum bihi*)... »

These are the believers here who make the agreement by the submission of themselves and their property and further, as taken from the context, by fighting in the cause of God until death.

This Covenant was contracted shortly before a «victory of Mecca.» The place was Hudaybiyah «under the tree.» The Qur'ān mentioned the tree along with the Covenant of the believers. What does seem probable is that there may have been some thought of the tree as a memorial and sign of the Covenant.

We outline here the story as it is found in Ibn Ishaq's account (*Sirah*, pp. 470-474), and the Qur'ān (Surah 48: 27)«The Prophetﷺ had a dream that he was entering Mecca in peace and safety. As the result of this vision he decided to go to Mecca for a pilgrimage

(*'umrah*), but expecting that the Quraysh would oppose his entering the city, he called on the Muslims to join him. Eventually he sat out on the 13th of March with 1400 men.[55] When the Meccans heard of this event, they assumed that Muhammad had come to fight them. They sent out 200 persons to bar the way. Muhammad's camel stopped when they reached Hudaybiyah. This was considered a sign, so the Muslims made camp there. There began an exchange of messages between the Meccans. When the negotiations with the Meccans proved difficult, Muhammad sent 'Uthman to be his representative in discussing matters with them.[56] In the meantime a group of Quraysh attacked the camp, and the report reached the Muslim camp that 'Uthman had been killed. The believers gathered around Muhammad and swore allegiance with him under the tree. According to the report of Jabir, they swore that they would not run away. But people used to say that the Prophet took their pledge to fight in the way of God till death. Later Muhammad learned that the report about 'Uthman's death was false.[57] »

This event was a test of faith for the believers. They really submitted their lives and their wills to God and His messenger.

What was in the Heart of the Believers?

The second part of the above verse (48:18) says that God was pleased with this contract. «He knew what was in their hearts». Baydawi adds as a comment, «of loyalty *(min al-ikhlas).*»[58]

This event is comparable to the trial of Abraham

and his son in Surah 37: 99-113. As the result of a dream Abraham said to his son:

> «... O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thou: He said: O my father; Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then, when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had flung him down upon his face, We called unto him O Abraham. Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo thus do we reward the good. Lo that verily was a clear test .[59]»

Then God blessed his sons and his generation as a reward and said: «peace and salutation to Abraham.»Likewise, the text of the Qur'ān (48:18) says, concerning the believers, that Muhammad, as the result of a dream, moved with his followers toward Mecca and they submitted themselves to God's will and made a Covenant of death from their hearts. «God sent down the peace (*sakinah*) upon them, and hath rewarded them with a near victory.»

The Hand of God

«Those who contract with you contract rather with God. The hand of God is above their hands.»[60] The definition of *bay'a* is «a striking together of hands of two contracting parties in token of the ratification of a sale.»[61] E. Tyan, in his article «*Bay'ah*,» in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. II, p. 1113, makes the following statement concerning the etymology of bay'ah:

> The term *bay'ah* is derived from the verb *ba'a* (to sell): the *bay'a 'ala* means «to reach agreement

> on.» The physical gesture was termed *baya'* because, precisely, it consisted of a movement of a hand and arms (*ba'*). And since the election of a chief (and the undertaking to submit to his authority) was demonstrated by a handclasp, it was naturally described by the very term which denoted this gesture.»

God's role in the pact is the divine hand above the hand of the believer. Thus, although human hands struck the agreement, the intent was toward God. This verse introduces the idea that God is a part of the Covenant, and it therefore cannot be broken.

The Armistice of Hudaybiyah

Eventually the Meccans and the believers agreed to:

> ...1) Lay aside war for ten years, 2) on condition that if anyone comes to Muhammad ﷺ without the permission of his guardian he will return him to them; and if anyone of those with Muhammad ﷺ comes to Quraysh they will not return him to him. 3) They will not show enmity one to another 4)and there shall be no secret reservation or bad faith. 5) He who wishes to enter into a bond and agreement with Muhammad ﷺ or Quraysh may do so.[62]

The believers stayed in Hudaybiyah for a few days questioning one another regarding the wisdom of this document. Some of them were inclined to doubt its wisdom. But they bore it in patience and then returned home. When they were half- way back, the Surat *al-Fath*

came down to the Prophet:ﷺ«We have given you a plain victory...»[63]

The document of Hudaybiyah was in fact the greatest victory for the believers, because after that they spread Islam further and faster than it had been spread before. The proof of this is that the Prophetﷺwent to Hudaybiyah the first time with 1,400 persons. Then in the year of the conquest of Mecca, two years afterwards, he marched with 10,000.[64]

9. The Faithful Women

The second item of the armistice of Hudaybiyah was all but unworkable, since it was difficult, if not impossible, to force the return of whoever left the Quraysh to become a Muslim, especially the helpless women. Thus the Prophetﷺreceived a revelation which overruled the terms of the armistice and provided for women emigrants or refugees to remain with the Muslim community in Medina (Surah 60: 10 -11).

According to al- Tabari, this verse came down when the Prophetﷺwas at the foot of Hudaybiya, while he was drawing up the armistice document, and some came to him at that time.[65] A. Yusuf Ali, as a modern Muslim commentator, says that the Meccans by that time (i.e., when the women came to the Prophet) had themselves already broken the treaty, about 8 A.H., not long before the conquest of Mecca.[66]

The main point of these verses is that before the believing women could be accepted in the Muslim community they had to be tested concerning their faith.

«O ye who believe; when there come to you believing women refugees examine (and test) them.»[67]

For theexamination,the women had to swear oaths that nothing but the love of Islam had brought them out.[68]

The following verse (number 12) directs attention to the points on which women entering Islam should pledge themselves. It was the oath exacted from men at the second pact of 'Aqabah,[69] but here the question is about women.

The Bond of the Women

The believing women should come to the Prophet ص taking an oath of allegiance unto him that: 1) they will ascribe nothing as a partner unto Allah 2)and will neither steal 3) nor commit adultery 4) nor kill their children. 5) nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet 6) nor disobey the Prophet ص in what is right.

Baydawi says concerning this verse, that it was revealed on the day of the conquest of Mecca, when the men having made their compact, Muhammad ص took the bond of the women.[70]

Tabari has gathered 25 traditions at this point concerning various women who made compacts with the Prophet.ص[71] The compacts were by nature verbal. The reporters of tradition have mentioned that Muhammad ص did not shake hands with the women when he made compact with them.[72] He is said to have put a cover over

his hand; to have held theirs; and to have put his hand in a vessel of water, after they did the same.

The Last Covenant of the Faithful Men and Women

According to the prophetic tradition, the Prophet, «on his last visit to Mecca, during the Farewell Pilgrimage, received Surah 5 (*al-Ma'idah*), and said: «This is the last revelation.»[73]

In verses 4-5, the word «today» is mentioned in the context of some declarations which would seem appropriate only near the close of the Prophet's ministry.[74]

We have quoted different parts of this surah[75] since it is distinguished from all other surahs by virtue of the fact that it contains the most complete and comprehensive version of the Covenants of the Qur'ān.

10. The Family

The term «*mithaq*» is used in the Qur'ān for a Covenant relationship between the Prophet and men, as in Sura 8:50. God and man, as in Surah 19:78; but when it is used with the verb «*akhadha*» (take), the latter refers to a Covenant between God and men, as in Surahs 2:63, 83, 84, 93; 3: 187; 4:154; 5:12, 14, 70; 7:169; 57:8.[76] The Qur'ān 4:21 used the term «*mithaq*» with the verb «*akhadha*» for the marriage pledge: «And how can ye take it (the money which ye have given unto them) since the one of you hath gone in unto the other, and they have received from you a firm Covenant.»[76] The word refers

not merely to a contract between two persons, but also to a divine Covenant between God and the couple. And all family laws which are mentioned in the Qur'ān (Surahs: 2, 4, 5, 24, 33, 58, 60, 65, and 66) are the conditions and the commandment list of that Covenant, as the Prophet ﷺ in the farewell pilgrimage said: «... You have rights over your wives and they have rights over you... you have taken them only as a trust from God (*bi-'amanat allah*), and you have the enjoyment of their persons by the words of God.» This probably refers to the above verse (20), and verse 57 of Surah 4, Women.

We can analyse the Covenant of the Family in Surah 4 (Women) as follows:

No.	Covenant's Items	Some Examples from Sura 4, Women	*Surah.Verse.*
1.	The lst party	In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.	4:0
2.	The 2nd party	O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord	4:1
3.	God's favors	Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.	4:1
4.	List of Commandments	And give unto the women (ye marry)free gift of their marriage portions... Allah (The Provision for) your children	4:4

		chargeth you concerning: ... [and most verses of this surah]	
5.	Promises	These are the limits of Allah. Whoso obeyeth Allah and His Messenger, He will make him enter Gardens...	4:13
6.	Warning	And whoso disobeyeth... He will make him enter Fire...	4:14

C. God's Favours

In most covenant statements in the Qur'ān there is a reference to the favours and benevolence of God. In order to emphasize the value of the promises made by the party to the Covenant, not only does He promise favours in the future, but His favours were given in the past and are still being given in the present as well. These references are intended as a kind of valuation or attestation of God's promises in the future as contained in the Covenant. At the same time, this part of the Covenant shows that man has some responsibility or obligation to God, and makes it even more obvious. This obligation applies even if man does not believe in the resurrection. For example, God's favours to the Muslim believers, Jews and Christians in the past, with their Covenants are mentioned in Surah5.

1. God's Favours to the Muslim Believers:

1. ... This day are those who disbelieve in despair of (ever harming) your religion; so fear them not, fear Me! 5:3
2. This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you. 5:3

3. and have chosen for you as religion *al-Islam*. 5:3
4. Allah would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you. 5:6
5. Remember Allah's grace upon you and His Covenant which He bound you.
6. O ye who believe! Remember Allah's favour unto you, how a people were minded to stretch out their hands against you but He withheld their hands from you; and keep your duty to Allah. 5:11

2. God's Favours to the People of Israel:

In verse 20 of the same Surah 5 , there are references to some of God's favours to the people of Israel. «And remember when Moses said unto his people: Remember Allah's favour unto you.»

1. How He placed among you Prophets, 5:20
2. and He made you kings, 5:20
3. and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures. 5:21
4. O my people! Go into the holy land which Allah hath ordained for you. 5:21
5. Lo! we did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and a light.» 5:44

3. God's Favours unto Jesus and the Disciples:

The third part of the same Surah deals with God's favours to Jesus: «... when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favour unto thee and unto thy mother:»

1. How I strengthened thee with the holy Spirit,5:110
2. So that thou speakest unto mankind in the cradle as in maturity; 5:110

3. and how I taught thee the Scripture and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; 5:110
4. and how thou didst shape of clay as it were the likeness of a bird by My permission, 5:110
5. and didst heal him who was born blind and the leper by My permission, 5:110
6. and how I restrained the children of Israel from (harming) you. 5:110
7. When the disciples (accepted God's Covenant) asked Lord to send down for them a table spread with food from heaven, that they may satisfy their hearts. And they may be witnessess (of God's Covenant)·Allah said: Lo! I send it down for you.»

There is another list of God's favours in Surah 55 (the Beneficent), addressed to mankind to refrain from sins: «Which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that ye deny?» This refrain is interspersed 31 times among its 78 verses. It seems to be used as a kind of general reinforcement of the principle that God is benevolent and bestows his favours freely on the 2nd party to His Covenant whenever that party is faithful to the terms as stipulated.

D. *List of Commandments*

The list of commandments is the basic part of the Covenant. Some of these commands belong to the past. The Qur'ān mentions them in order to renew God's Covenant, not only for the people of the Book; but for all believers, as Surah 6: 151-152 illustrates, with its reference to the Ten Commandments of Moses. The other part of the list of commandments in the Qur'ān is addressed to the believers, as in Surah 5 where 16 commands are mentioned. Each command starts by: «O ye who believe!» Most surahs of the Qur'ān contain some list of commandments. And some Suras, like Sura 2, show the development of the list of commandments from the time of Muhammad, ﷺ just as the Qur'ān itself develops from short Surahs and short lists of commandments to longer ones.

The list of commandments in this surah and the other five surahs which contain the story of Adam, are mentioned in a general and symbolic way, using the figure of a tree.[78] It can be readily seen that the different nations are branches of the tree[79] and God's Covenant is written on its leaves. The bounties of God are its fruits,[80]

and wrong-doing *(zulm)*, tyranny and expulsion from the Garden are the punishments for whoever approaches the it and picks the fruit.[81] In the following chart we show the list of commandments and prohibitions for Surah 2. Analysis of this surah on this basis shows that it has a clearly defined unitiary theme which binds the whole together. Using this example, it is possible to demonstrate that other surahs of the Qur'ān also reflect a degree of unity which is not otherwise apparent. First of all, this surah mentions general commandments from Adam to Muhammad to show how this final Covenant subsumes all the earlier Covenants. Then it gives a specific list of commandments from verse 152 to 275. Then it says: «.... These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them to not....» (v. 187). «.... For whosoever transgresseth Allah's limits: Such are wrongdoers *(zalimun)*.» (v. 229). I think this list provides a specific example of the tree of prohibitions in the story of Adam, which is mentioned earlier, where it says, «...; but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrongdoers.» (V. 35). I have constructed a diagram to illustrate this idea.

The Development of Commandment Lists from Adam to Muhammad in Surah 2

No.	The Prophets	List of Commandments in Surah 2	S.V.
1.	Adam	Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat ye freely (of the fruits) whereof where ye will;but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrongdoers *(zalimin)*.	2:35

2.	Adam's children	1. Follow God's guidance.	2:38
		2. Do not reject Faith.	2:39
		3. Do not deny God's revelation.	2:39
3.	Abraham	1. My promise is not within the reach of wrongdoers.	2:124
		2. Sanctify My House.	2:125
		3. Lord said to Abraham: Surrender! He said: I have surrendered to the Lord *(Rabb)* of the worlds.	2:131
4.	Ishmael	The same did Abraham enjoin upon his sons and also Jacob, (saying): O my sons! Lo! Allah hath chosen for you the (true) religion; therefore die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him).[i.e., who are Muslims].	2:133
5.	Isaac		
6.	Jacob		
7.	Jacob's sons	Or were ye present when death came to Jacob, when he said unto his sons: what will ye worship after me. They said:1) we shall worship thy God, the God of thy father, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, 2) and unto Him we have surrendered.	2:133

8.	Moses	And verily we gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him,	2:87
9.	Jesus	and we gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs.	2:87
10.	Muhammad	Say: we believe in 1)Allah, 2) that which is revealed unto us and that which revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which moses and Jesus received and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. 3) We make no distinction between any of them, and 4) unto Him we have surrendered.	2:136

E. The Promises

The reward which was promised to those who fulfill the conditions of the Covenant is not something which will be given only in the next world, but some of it will be made available in this life as well.

The promises of God in this life are stewardship of man or (Man as His vicegerent) on earth, and a comfortable life; as in Surah 24: 55. God promises the believers who do good works that: 1) He will make them succeed the present rulers in the earth just as He caused those who were before them to succeed others; 2) He will establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, 3) He will give them in exchange safety after fear; 4) the Covenant of the Prophets and believers included the promise of God's protection, for «... We verily do help Our messengers, and those who believe, ...» (Surah 40: 51), «Then We save Our messengers and the believers. It is incumbent upon Us (*haqqan'alayna*) to save believers.» *(Surah 10:104.)*

In Surah 30:1-6 God promises the believers help to victory when the armies of the Eastern Roman Empire had been defeated by Persians in all the territories adjacent to Arabia. 5) An immense reward was promised

in some verses of the Qur'ān for whosoever kept his Covenant with God (Surah 48:10) .6) Paradise is also the reward of those who believe and do good. (Surah 2:83). The Qur'ān records instances where the children of Israel claimed that none will enter the Garden but be who was a Jew. (Surah 2:111). The Qur'ān asks: «Did you take a Covenant. Or are you saying about God something you do not know? (Surah 2:80). The Qur'ān provides its own answer in the next two verses: «Paradise is the reward of those who believe and do good.» So the Covenant made with the children of Israel must not be turned into a claim for special rights. «My Covenant includeth not wrongdoers.» (Surah 2:124).

F. The Warning

The Covenant is described in the Qur'ān as something to be inquired about,[82] that is, concerning its fulfillment. The business of the Day of Judgement supposedly includes this inquiry. Most Covenants contain some statement about the consequences that will befall upon those who break them. For instance, in Surah 3:77: «Lo; those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah's Covenant and their oaths, they have no share in the Hereafter. Allah will neither speak to nor look upon them on the Day of Resurrection.»

The main point is that whoever breaks the Covenant will be sent to Hell on the Last Day. We conclude that the role of Hell in the Covenant is to serve as a sanction towards the enforcement of the Covenant.

The punishment for breaking the Covenant is not only something in the next world. There are some verses which warn (those inheriting the land and thus reaping the crop of their evil-doings)such as: «If God will,He can smite them for their sins and print upon their hearts so that they hear not» (Surah 7:100). Or, «that God will choose instead of them a folk other than them.» (Surah 9:39).

The Proofs of the Resurrection

As the Resurrection and Judgement Day are difficult to accept, many people think that there is nothing except life on this earth.[83] The Qur'ān mentions many proofs in answer to the objections of different groups of people and emphasizes the reality of Judgement Day. We can divide these proofs into four groups:

1. The proofs for the possibility of resurrection by reference to God's attributes, such as: «*al-Mubdi'*» (the Beginner of oreation) (Surah 30:27), «al-Qadir» (the Powerful) (Surah 46:33), «*al-'Alim,*» (the Knower) (Surah 34:3) «*al-Khallaq*» (the Supreme Creator) (Surah 36:81), «*al-Murid*» (the Willer) (Surah 36:82), etc. By mentioning these attributes, the Qur'an calls attention to the fact that He who is willer, knower and able to effect something like heavens and the earth reference to a preexisting exemplar, is all the more able to effect something which has already been produced.

2. The second kind provides some examples for the resurrection from nature, like the rebirth of the earth and trees in spring (Surah 22:7), the stages leading to the butterfly (Sura 101:4), locusts and their phases (Surah 54:7), the creation of a baby before its birth (Surah 22:6, 33:17), and the repair of the finger's lines (Surah 75:2).

3. Traditional proofs like bringing four birds back to life by Abraham (Surah 2:260), the revival of a man by Moses (Surah 2:73), the revival of 'Uzir and his donkey after one hundred years (Surah 2:159), the creation of a bird by Jesus (Surah 3:49), and the revival of the companions of the cave *(Ahl al-Kahf)* after three hundred years (Surah 18:20).

4. There are some verses which prove the necessity of Judgement Day from the point of view of perfection *(al-takamul)* Surah 84:6, wisdom *(Hikmah)* Surah 15:25, Justice *('Adl)* Surah 41:46.

G. Witness and Formula Statement

Affirmation and bearing witness[84] represent an important part of the Covenant. Some verses in the Qur'ān look like formula statements for this kind of action. For example: «Say: He, God, is one»,[85] «Say: He is my Lord. There is no god but He. In Him I put my trust and to Him do I repent.»[86]

In the Qur'ānic accounts this bearing of witness is also a feature of the former religions. The disciples of Jesus, upon submitting themselves, said: «... We believe.... Enroll us among those who witness (to the truth).»[87] In reproving the children of Israel for breaking their Covenant, the Qur'ān says: «When we made a Covenant with you... then you affirmed (it) and you bore witness.»[88] Here the bearing of witness is directly related to making Covenant. Perhaps this witness is not more than «We hear and we obey» *(sami'na wa ata'nā)*[89]. There is an affirmation recorded between God and the Prophets in Sura 3:81. «He said: Have you consented and made my Covenant *(isri)* to that? They said: We consent. He said: Then bear witness.»

Another verse in the Qur'ān is connected with a similar story that a Covenant was made with the

descendants of Adam. Here the dialogue goes. «Am I not your Lord?» They said: «Yes, we bear witness.» (Surah 7:172).

It is evident that in the Qur'ān there is a connection between Covenant and bearing witness. The Qur'ān gives us witness statements in various formulaic expressions.

H. Oaths by God's Signs and Favours

Among the pagan Arabs the use of oaths with solemn meanings, was very common. They used oaths in their pacts to witness the truth of a solemn affirmation and to emphasize the serious nature of their agreements.

Most Meccan Suras of the Qur'ān, which were revealed among pagan Arabs, used oaths by God's signs and favours to emphasize the affirmation of the Covenant and to show the greatness of God's signs. Also this was to draw people's attention to nature, its creatures, and God's special relationship to man as Cherisher, and Protector;[90] and then to turn their attention to symbols or signs by using the wonders of the heavens and the earth.[91] The following list gives an example of the Meccan Surah which are emphasized by oaths:

No.	Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	*Surah. Verse.*
1.	The lst party	In the name of God Most Gracious Most Merciful.	91:0
2.	The 2nd party	[Men in general and Meccan people in particular]	91:0

3.	Oath by God's Signs and Favours	1) By the Sun and his splendor	91:1
		2) By the Moon as she follows him;	91:2
		3) By the Day as it shows up glory;	91:3
		4) By the Night as it conceals it;	91:4
		5) By the Firmament and its structure:6)By the Earth and its expanse; 7) By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it;	91:5 91:6 91:7
		8) and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;	91:8
4.	Promises	Truly he succeeds that purifies it,	91:9
5.	Warning	And he fails that corrupts it.	91:10
6.	Lesson from the Past	The Thamud rejected (their Prophet) through their inordinate wrongdoing... then they rejected him... So the Lord on account of their crime, obliterated their traces and made them equal.	91:14

I. Signs of the Covenant

The Qur'ānic Covenants usually have sign of revival; as the rainbow was the sign of Noah's Covenant (cf. Old Testament, Gen. 9:17), circumcision was the sign of Abraham's Covenant (cf. Old Testament, Gen. 17:11), and the Altar for the Moses' Covenant. There are likewise some signs for God's Covenant in Islam, as follows:

1. The Shahadah

When a Muslim is born, the first sentence chanted in his ears is the *Shahadah,* the witness of faith. This custom acknowledges his recognition of the time when God made a Covenant with man and asked: «Am I not your Lord *('alastu birabbikum)?*» and man answered, «Yea, we testify» *(qalu bala).* In fact man takes up the challenge of this invitation, and agrees to bear this trust as the servant of his Lord.

2. The Adhan and Prayers

The Muslims should remember this Covenant five times a day when they hear the *adhān* (call to prayer) from the minaret and when they say the *tashahhud* in prayer.[92]

3. Circumcision

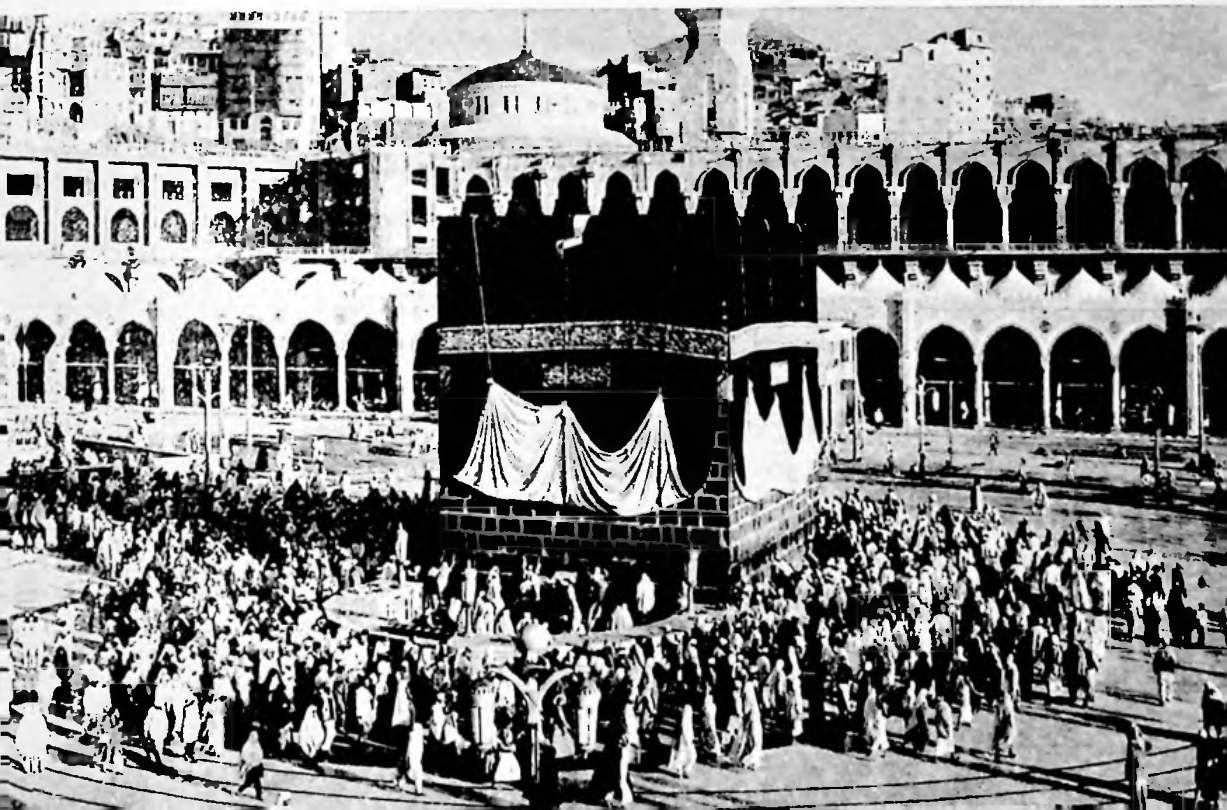
In Islam every baby boy, when he is a few days old must be circumcised[93] to show that he shares God's Covenant with Abraham. (Surah 2: 124-130).

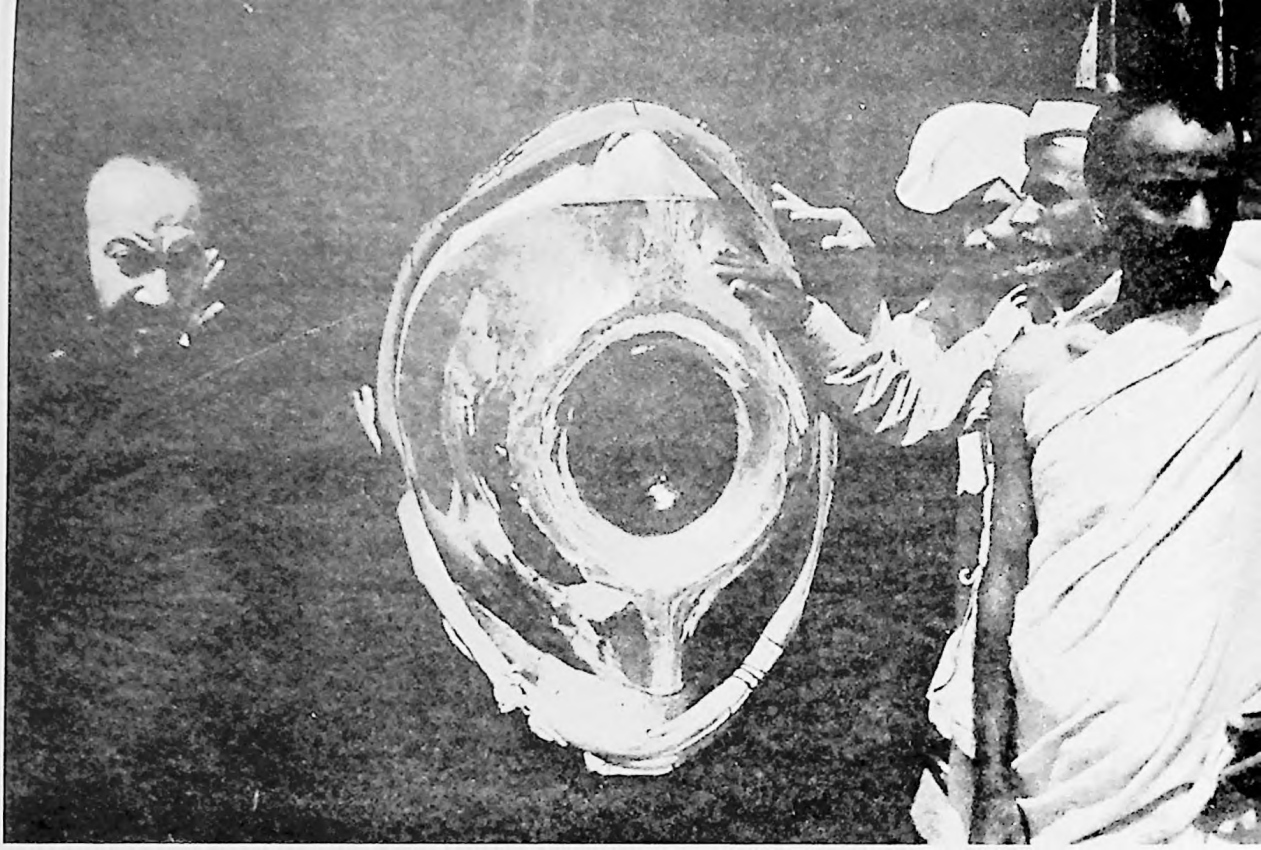
4. The House (Ka', at Mecca)

In explaining and commenting on the Qur'ānic verse: «And when We made the House (at Mecca) a resort for mankind», (Surah 2: 125), the Imam al-Sadiq said: «The House (of the *Ka'*- bah at Mecca) is the Covenant *('ahd)* of God on earth; whoever enters it is like the one who enters into Covenant with God, and whoever stays away from it is just like the one who declines to enter into Covenant with God.»[94]

5. The Black Stone

There is a black stone set in a corner of the Kabah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which is in fact a meteor in the Islamic tradition.





This stone, which fell down from the heavens, symbolizes the original Covenant *(mithaq)* made between man and God.[95] Every Muslim, when he goes on pilgrimage, touches the stone to renew his Covenant with God. According to the Prophetic tradition, «the Black Stone is the right hand of God *(Yamin Allah)* in His earth.»[96]

6. The Day of Greater pilgrimage and the Mount of Mercy *(Jabal al-Rahmah)*

The passage, it is said, was revealed on Friday evening, being the day of the pilgrims visiting Mount Arafat (Mount of Mercy), the last time Muhammad visited Mecca and therefore called «Farewell Pilgrimage» *(Hajjat al-Wada')*.

The commentators say that after this time no positive or negative precept was given.[97] This day is a big festival for Muslims every year [98] and the Mount of Mercy is a memorial place.

J. Lessons from the Past

Most often the Qur'ānic idea of Covenant is mentioned along with some lessons from the past. Some surahs, like Surah 7, are specifically concerned with this aspect of Covenant. The lessons which are mentioned in Surah 7 are related in connection with the different Covenants between God and various nations to make them inheritors of the earth and superior in power and culture to other nations. But most of them did not keep their Covenant (vv , 94-102). For this reason God punished them and took away His favours and blessings, removed their power, and gave these to other nations.

The lessons found in Surah 7 are the different details of a more general concept which is expressed by verse 4 as a lesson concerning the Covenant of the Muslim believers. These lessons briefly are as follows:

1. The Covenant of Adam: a symbolic story which shows that expulsion from the Garden and the comfortable life (i.e., *Jannah*)is the consequece of disobeying the Commandments of God's Covenant, which we have shown in article 4 as represented by the prohibited tree (vv, 11-17).
2. The Covenant of Adam's children: that there is no excuse for any individual to say either that he was

heedless, or that he was a follower of his father's sin. (See verses 26-53, 172-173).

3. The Covenant of Noah: the consequence of following one's forefathers blindly *('Amin). (VV. 59-64).*
4. *The Covenant with the people of'* Ad: as an example of those who rejected God's signs *(Mukadhdhibin).* (VV. 65-72).
5. The Covenant of the people of Thamud: as a lesson about those who were like Satan, the arrogant party *(Mustakbirin),* and the corrupt *(Mufsidin),* and the unbelievers *(Kafirin).* (See VV. 73-77).
6. The Covenant of the people of lot: as a lesson about the people who indulged in sin and crime *(Mujrimin)* and immoderates in their passions *(Musrifin).* (VV. 80-84).
7. The Covenant of the people of Madyan: as an example of the consequence of economic ruin *(Khasirin)* and of cheating or short-changing in transactions, and the result of general mischief *(Mufsidin).* (VV. 85-92).
8. The Covenant of the people of Pharaoh: as an example of man's nature, as one who believes in God's unity and in danger makes a Covenant with God promising to believe in and obey Him, if He will remove the danger. But after reaching safety, one forgets and proceeds to associate partners with God. (See verses 134-137, 175).
9. The Covenant of the people of Moses: a lesson about people who were exploited and weakened under a powerful dominion; but God made them the inheritors of such domain and bestowed his blessings upon them because of their endurance. (See verses 109-177).

10. In the same way God will take back the stewardship *(knilafah)* and blessings from the wrong-doing people, and will give them to the people who are weak but faithful, and tothose who are performers of good deeds throughout history. (See verses 94-102).

There are similar lessons to be found in other examples of Covenant in the Qur'ān, in many other surahs.

Formula

1. See below, pp. 77-79.
2. As in Surah 3:117 where God is called «***Raghib***» (the Watcher) and «Shahid» (Witness), concerning His Covenant with Jesus.
3. Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat,* P. 182.
4. Qur'ān, 3:9.
5. M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1951), P. 81. (Hereafter referred to as *Reconstruction).*
6. *See below, PP. 61 ff.*
7. *See below, PP. 77 ff.*
8. *See al-Tabari, Tafsir al-Tabari,* ed. and comm. Mahmud Muhammad Shakir (Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1347 A.H.), vol. 9, P. 79; al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil* (Cairo: n.p., n.d.), P.228; G.F. Sale, *The Koran* (New York: n.p., 1877), P. 122. A similar traditon is mentioned through the Imam Sadiq, see Ibn Babawayh, *Tawhid Saduq* (Teheran: Budhur Jmihri, 1956), P. 270.
9. Abu al-Hudhayl, *Kitab al-Hujjah cf. al-Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Lubnani, 1958), vol. 7, P. 61.
10. It is one of the most important pieces of evidence for those who believe that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is false. See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad* (Teheran: n.p., 1314 A.H.), PP. 135-7.
11. *'Alam al-dharr* could mean world of essences, or atoms, the implication in either case being before man obtained concrete existence.
12. Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf 'an Haqa'iq Ghawamid al-Tanzil wa 'Uyun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Ta'wil,* ed. Mustafa Husayn Ahmad, 4 vols. (Cairo: n.d., 1953-5), vol. 1, P. 517. (Hereafter referred to as *Kashshaf).*
13. Abu al-Futuh al-Razi, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* (Teheran: n.p. 1325), vol. 5, PP. 7-

14. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ruh fi al-Kalam 'ala Arwah al-Mawta wa al-Ahya' bi al-Dala'il min al-Kitab wa al-Sunnahwa al-Athar wa Aqwal al-'Ulama' al-Akhyar* (Haydarabad al-Dakkan: Matba'at Majlis Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Nizamiyah, 1324/1906), cf. Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-Hakim* (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1367/1948), vol. 9, P. 395.
15. L. Massignon, « Le Jour de Covenant (Yawm al-Mithaq),» *Oriens* 15 (1962), P. 86.
16. Abu Ja'far al-Saduq, *al-'Aqa'id* (Tabriz: N.P., 1371 A.H.), P. 33.
17. For this reason some Sufis say «Yea» *(bala)* when they hear the call of the *mu'adhdhin:* «We testify that there is no god but God», ***see Massignon,*** «Le Jour de Covenant», p. 394.

18. Ibn Arabi, *Al-Tadbirat al-Ilahiyah fi Islah al-Mamlakah al-Insaniyah* (Leiden: Brill, 1919), P. 134. (Hereafter referred to as *Tadbirat).*
19. It is the concept of the term «rabb» in the above verse.
20. When we so testify concerning ourselves, the obligation is as it were assumed by us; for it follows from our very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted.
21. Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat,* p. 182.
22. In order to explain this whole passage, the commentators tell the following story: When Eve was big with her first child, the devil came to her and asked her to name him 'Abd al-Harith (the servant of the devil), instead. And with this, Adam and Eve are here charged with an act of idolatry. See Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 231.
23. Tabari says that their action is only making another name the partner of God, and not another thing, and this is not a sin, see Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol.9,P.231. There are some traditons from the Shi'ah which say that they were guilty of idolatry in obedience *(shirk a;.ta,ah),* not in worship *(Shirk al-'ibadah),* see Tabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayan,* vol. 7, p 81.
24. Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, n.d.), vol. 17, P. 96.
25. See above, PP. 17-23.
26. According to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (quoted from 'Abduh, *Tafsir,* vol. 13, p 350) this Covenant, in fact, is a Covenant between God and the nations under the leadership of their prophets as in Surah 65:1 «O prophet! When Ye (men) put away women...» when it says «Prophet» it means «all people». So, the verse means: «When Allah made (His) Covenant with the prophets (representatives of the nations)...». This is similar to Surah 7:172 in which the posterity of Adam are drawn from his back and acknowledge their Lord. It should be noted that the verse itself speaks of the children of Adam, that is, mankind, rather backs», not «his back.»
27. According to Arthur Jeffery in «The Qur'ān as Scripture,» *Muslim World* XI, P. 128, the fact, however, is that in this verse we have a reflection of the popular Jewish legend that all the patriarchs and the prophets were assembled at Sinai, both those who had been and those who were to come to witness the giving of Torah to Moses, since the Torah was the great Covenant of God with His people (it is so called in Deuteronomy IX, 9-11), and there Moses is told that the perfect successor he desires will not come till the end of time when he will come as Messiah.
28. Muhammad himself said: «I am the answer to Abraham's prayer, see Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad,* p
29. *Hikmah* means «wisdom», but in the Qur'ān it has a special meaning, as expressed in Surah 17 from verse 4 to verse 39.
30. Almost identical with Sura 2:136.
31. Lane, *Lexicon,* vol. IV, P. 1416.
32. See foot-note 29.
33. The revelation was obviously given to the Prophet as a gift to his people put in Covenant terms; this is most logically an agreement on the part of the

messenger to deliver the message. For the role of the messenger in delivering the messages, see T. Izutsu, *God and Man in the Kor'an (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), PP. 151-197.*

34. See ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, trans. Gunabadi (Teheran: Bungah Tarjumih wa Nashri Kitab, 1345/1966), vol. 1, PP. 320-3.

35. After making the Covenant, see Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol. 10, P. 124.

36. G.F. Sale, *The Koran,* p. 75.

37. Qur'ān, 5:15; see also Surah 2:74.

38. The Qur'ān mentioned this group under the title of «***Those who were given the Book (ahl al-kitab)***». Baydawi says that this Covenant is made with the *'ulama'*, the learned men, see *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 99.

39. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Kitab al-Aghani,* 20 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-M Sriyah, 1929), vol. 1, PP. 604-5, vol. 2, P. 126, vol. 3, P. 59.

40. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* new edition, vol. III, P.388.

41. Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari* ([Cairo]: Matba'at Bulaq, 1314), vol. 5, P. 82.

42. *Hilf al-Fudul* was a famous pact concluded between several Qurayshi clans a few years before the Prophet's mission. The Prophet is said to have been present when it was concluded. He said: «If I were invited to (agree to it), now that we are in Islam, I would accept willingly.» For the events which brought it about, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* New Edition, vol. III, P. 380, Ya'qubi, *Tarikhi - Ya'*qubi (Teheran: Bungah-i Tarjumah va-Nashr-i Kitab, 1342-43 [1963-4), vol. 2, P. 12 and Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Ta'*rikh, 20 vols (Egypt: al-Matbaah al-Muniriyah, 1348), vol 2, P. 26.

43. *Hilf al-Mutayyabin* was arranged on the occasion of the disagreement which arose between the clans of Qurāysh on the subject of the allocation of the ritual offices of the Ka'bah and of the pilgrimage. They were called «Mutayyabin» because they put their hands in perfume in front of the Ka'ba and then strok the Ka'bah with their hands. See M.J. Kister, «Some Reports Concerning Mecca from Jahiliyya to Islam,» *JESHO IV (June, 1972), PP. 81-93, and The Encyclopedia of Islam,* New Edition, Vol. III, P. 388. and Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah (Cairi: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1385/1955), Vol. 2, P. 84.

44. See Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* Trans. S.M. Stern, 2 vols. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), vol. 1, P. 70.

45. See also Surah 23:52 and the first section of *Sahifah* (The Constitution of Medina), Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Babi al-Halabi, 1375), P. 341; Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad.* A translation of Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1955), P. 230.

46. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab,* vol. 7, P. 53, s.v. *HLF.*

47. Baydawi, *Tafsir al-Baydawi,* vol. 1PP. 349, 22-24; Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol. 10, 91. 15, 92. 13-15, 93. 7-9.

48. Sale, *Koran,* P. 82, n. X; palmer, *The Qur'ān (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), P. 88; cf. M. Ali, Holy Qur'ān,* P. 243, n. 669 and G.F. Sale and E.M. Wherry, *A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'ān* (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller

Verlag, 1973), vol. II, P. 124, n. 9.
49. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirah,* P. 286 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* P. 197).
50. *Ibid.,* PP. 286-88 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* PP. 197-8).
51. *Ibid.,* PP. 288-90 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad, PP. 198-99).*
52. *Ibid.,* PP. 304-5 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* PP. 208).
53. Qur'ān, 48:18, 19.
54. See W.M. Watt, *Companion to the Qur'ān,* based on Arberry's translation (London: Allen & Un win [1967]), P. 234; *idem, Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), P. 50.
55. The number of the party is not certain; according to one report there were 1400.
56. Watt, *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), P. 187. Muhammad sent 'Uthman because he belonged to the same clan as Abu Sufyan and so had powerful protection in Mecca; there was no sanctity in those days about the persons of envoys.
57. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirah,* P. 746 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* P. 503.
58. Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 679.
59. Qur'ān, 37: 102-6.
60. Qur'ān, 48:10
61. Lane, *Lexicon,* P. 285; cf. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'*Arab, vol. VI, P. 26.
62. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirah,* P. 747 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* P. 504).
63. *Ibid.,* P. 749 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad, P. 505).*
64. *Ibn Hisham's* notes, 754 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* P. 769).
65. Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol. 28, P. 43.
66. A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān* (U.S.: McGregor & Werner, 1964), PP. 1530, 1534, n. 5422.
67. Qur'ān, 60:10
68. See Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol. 28, P. 42.
69. See above, PP. 49-50
70. Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 732.
71. Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari,* vol. 28, PP. 47-50
72. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar Bayrut, Dar Sadir, 1376-77/1957-58), vol. III, P. 432.
73. M. Shaltut, *Tafsir,* P. 286.
74. Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1958), P. 110; T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans* (Leipzig: Dietrich, 1909-38), i, pp 227-229. Blachere and Rodwell, who arranged their translations chronologically, put Sura 5 last.
75. See above, PP. 10, 11, 38-44, 48-9, and below, PP. 55-61.
76. John Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), PP. 8-9; Sale *The Koran,* P. 56.
77. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirah,* P. 969 (Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad,* P. 651).
78. Qur'ān, 2:35, 38:73, 7:12, 17:62, 15:27, 18:52.
79. For the children of Adam, see Qur'ān, 2:38, 7:26-40, 172-5; for Abraham,

see Qur'ān, 2:124-31; and for the children of Israel, see Qur'ān, 2:41-86.
80. Qur'ān, 2. 187.
81. For a better understanding of the concept of «*zalimun*» in the Qur'an, see Qur'ān, 2: 92, 95, 57-9, 124, 187, 272, 279, 281, 246; 7:4, 19, 41, 45, 148; 33:72.
82. Qur'ān, 17:34.
83. Qur'ān, 6:22, 11:7, 34:7. For the ideas of people in pre-Islamic times, see Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Tijariyah, 1377/1958), vol. 2, p. 102, and Mutahhar Maqdisi, *al-Bad' wa al-Ta'rikh* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), vol. 1, P. 144.
84. *Shahadah* literally means: «testimony» (from *shahada* «to see»). The religious use of the word *shahadah* is the Muslim profession of faith: «There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.»
85. Qur'ān, 112: 1; we can find many surahs and passages in the Qur'ān like this.
86. Qur'ān, 13:30.
87. Qur'ān, 3: 52-53
88. Qur'ān, 2: 84
89. Qur'ān, 5:7.
90. For instance, «By the Lord»; see Qur'ān 15:92, 19:68, 34:3.
91. For example, «By the declining day, Lo; man is in a state of loss,» Qur'ān, 103:1-2.
92. For this reason some Muslims say, «*shahadah (ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah)* inthe *adhan*. See L. Massignon, «Le Jour de Covenant,» P. 87.
93. According to the Old Testament (Gen. 17:11) «From now you (Abraham) must circumcise every baby when he is eight days old; this will show that there is a Covenant between you and Me.»
94. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq,*Tafsir al-Qur'ān,* attributed to Imam Sadiq,MS. Chester Beatty No. 5235, fol. 8 b.
95. Seyyid Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960), P. 26.
96. See Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat,* P. 576.
97. Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 140.
98. M. Shaltut, *Tafsir,* P. 286.

CHAPTER II

Analysis of Surah 7 By Using the Covenant

II. Analysis of Surah 7 by using the Covenant

A study of the contents of Surah 7 *(al-A'raf)* and Surah 6 *(al-An'ām)* clearly shows that both surahs have the same historical background and belong to the same period. It is said that both of them were revealed in the last year of the Prophet's life, at Makkah.[1] Surah 6 is more concerned about the divine Covenant which leads Muslim believers to the vicegerency *(khilafah)* and inheritance of the earth. The last part mentions the ten commandments, and at the end says: «He it is who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you.»

But Surah 7 starts with the general covenant with the Muslim believers, and then mentions the different covenants between God and various nations, as lessons from the past, in order to include Muslim believers under these earlier covenants. Thus Surah 7 is the completion of Surah 6.[2]

Our analysis will follow this scheme:

No.	*Subject*	*Verses number of Surah 7*
1.	The General Covenant with Muslims believers	1-10
2.	Lessons from the Covenant of Adam	11-24

3. Lessons from the Covenant of Adam's children 25-53
4. Lessons from the Covenant of Nations 54-58
   a. Covenant of Noah 59-64
   b. Covenant of 'Ad 65-72
   c. Covenant with Thamud's people 73-79
   d. Covenant with Lot's People 80-84
   e. Covenant with Madyan (Midian) 85-93
   f. General Lessons from the Past 94-102
   g. Covenant with Pharaoh 103-108
   h. Covenant of Moses' People 144-149
5. The New Covenant for the People of the Book 156-157
6. The Consequence of the Breaking of God's Covenant 159-170
7. Covenant for the New Generation: 169
   a. Covenant of the Scripture 170
   b. Covenant of the Mount 171
8. God's Covenant with the Nature of Man 172-147
9. The Covenant of During Hardships 189-190
10. Ten Commandments for God's Guidance and His Vicegerency 180, 199-200

1. The General Covenant with Muslims believers:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an (Surah 7)	Surah Verse
1	The lst party	In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.	7:0
2	The 2nd party	(It is) a Scripture that is revealed unto Thee... and (it is) a Reminder unto believers.	7:1

3	List of Commandments	1) Follow that which is sent unto you... 2) Follow no protecting friends beside Him.	7:3
4	General lesson from the past	How many a township have We destroyed! As a raid by night,or while they slept at noon, Our terror came unto them. No plea had they when Our terror came unto them, save that they said: Lo! We were wrong doers.	7:4
5	Promises	The weighing on that day is the true (weighing). As for those whose scale is heavy, they are the successful.	7:8
6	Warning	And as for those whose scale is light:those are they who lose their souls because they disbelieved Our revelations.	7:9
7	God's favours	1) And We have given you power in the earth 2) and appointed you therein a livelihood. Little give ye thanks!	7:10

The following verses are de scriptions of these articles, namely:

1. The Signs, Attributes of God (Allah).
2. The Mediator of the Covenant (Muhammad).
3. List of Commandments which are revealed from Adam until Muhammad's time.
4. Lessons from the Past: from wrong-doers *(zalimun)* and thanks-givers *(shakirun),* the successful *(muflihun)* and those are they who lose their souls *(khasirun).*
5. The Day of Judgement.
6. The power in the earth of vicegerency *(khilafah)* which God has given to the nations.

2. *Lessons from the Covenant of Adam*

It is the first lesson and revelation addressed to Muslim believers under the general and symbolic Covenant between God and man as found in the story of Adam.[3]

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	v. No
1	The 1st party	And We (Allah) created	11
2	The 2nd party	you (mankind)	11
3	God's favours	1)created you,2)fashioned you,3)then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblis.	11

4	Promise	... O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden *(al-Jannah,)*[4]	19
5	List of Commandments	... and eat from whence ye will, but come not nigh this tree (Satan's quality).[5]	19
		1. *Disobedience:* Iblis was not of those who make prostration.	11
		2. *Pride:* He said: What hindered thee that thou didst not fall prostrate when I bade thee?(Iblis) said: I am better than him.	12
		3. *Materialism:* Thou createdst me of fire while him Thou didst create of mud.	12
		He said: Then go down hence! It is not for thee to show pride here, so go forth! Lo! Thou are of those degraded.	13
		4. *Plot*: He said: Reprieve me till the day when they are raised (from dead).	14
		He said: Lo! Thou art of those reprieved.	15
		5. ***Attribution of self sin to***	

		the other: He said: Now, because Thou hast sent me astray...	16
		6. *Misleading:* ... I shall lurk in ambush for them on Thy Right Path.	16
		7. *Whispering:* Then Satan whispered to them that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame,	20
		8. *Lying:* ... and said: your Lord forbade you from this tree only lest ye should become angels or become of the immortals.	20
		9. *Deceit:* And he swore unto them (saying): Lo! I am a sincere adviser unto you.	
		10. *Cheating:* Thus did he lead them on with guile.	
		but come not nigh this tree, lest ye become wrong - doers *(zalimin).*	19
6	Warning	... Lo! Satan is an open enemy to you... As for such of them as follow thee (Satan), surely I will fill hell with all of you.	22 18

3. Lessons from the Covenant of Adam's Children (23-53)

Then the Muslim believers are addressed under the general Covenant between God and Adam's Children which includes all mankind.

This passage shows that man after the realization of the results of disobedience, regrets and returns to God, and God turns to him and gives him guidance and His new Covenant as follows:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'ān	S.V.
1	The lst party	We (Allah) have revealed unto ...	7:26
2	The 2nd party	... you (O Children of Adam ...)	
3	God's favour	... Raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture,[6] ...	
4	Lessons from the Past	... but the rainment of restraint from evil, that is the best. Let not Satan seduce as he caused your (first) parents to go forth from the Garden	7:26 7:27
5	List of Commandments	Say: My Lord enjoined 1) justice, 2) set your faces, upright (toward Him) at	7:29

		every place of worship 3) and call upon Him, making religion pure for Him (only), 4) «Wear your beatiful apparel at every time and place of prayer, eat and drink: but waste not by excess for God loveth not the wasters.»[7] 5) Say: My Lord forbiddeth only indecencies, such of them as are apparent and such as are within, 6) and sin 7) and wrongful oppression 8) and that ye associate with Allah that for which no warrant hath been revealed, 9) and that ye tell concerning Allah that which ye know not.	7:31 7:33
6	Promises	O Children of Adam! If messengers of your own came unto you who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil and amendeth-there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. ... those who believe and do good works-We tax not any soul beyond its scope.	7:35

		Such are rightful owners of the Garden.	
7.	Warning	But they who deny Our Revelation and scorn them such are rightful owners of the Fire.... nor will they enter the Garden ... (See also verse 41, 44-53).	3:76 3:40

The Garden *(al-Jannah)*

Verses 35 until 53 explain the meaning of the Garden *(al-Jannah)* and its inhabitants.

The study of the whole surah shows that it is probably the same Garden which Adam was forced to leave through disobedience. But the Children of Adam can inherit it by faith *(Iman)* and righteous work *('amal salih)* as it is mentioned in the verse 43: «Verily, the messengers of our Lord did bring the truth. And it is cried with them: This is the Garden. Ye inherit it for what ye used to do.»

In the following verses we will see that it is the custom of God throughout history to take blessings from the land of the wrong-doing people and give them to the rightdoing people.

4. Lessons from the Covenant of Nations

As is mentioned in the Qur'ān 2:31, God created man to become His vicegerent *(khalifah)*. According to some commentators such as Ibn Kathir (d. 774 A.H.),

the term *khalifah* means a nation that replaces another nation, as the Qur'ān 6:165 says: «It is He who hath made you inheritors of the earth *(khala'if fi al-ard)*: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others, that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you.»[8]

The explanation of this verse is as follows: In every period of time, God makes a nation inheritors of the earth and superior in power and culture and civilization to other nations in order to try them. For this, God sends His messenger to the nation and makes a covenant with them which is very important in the life of the nation. In this Surah (7: 5-172) the Qur'ān mentions the *vicegerency* of the nations of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and the people of Israel, as shown in the following chart:

Inheritors of the Earth in S. 7

No.	Nations	The Verses of the Qur'ān	Surah.Verses.
1	Noah	...We saved him and those with him in the ship...	7:64
		...and made them viceroys (in the earth)... *(Khala'if)*	7:74
2	'Ad	... Remember how He made you viceroys *(khulafa')* after Noah's folk, and gave you growth of stature	7:79
3	Thamud	And remember how He made you viceroys *(khulafa')* after 'Ad and gave you station in the earth.	7:74

4.	The People of Israel	And We caused the fold who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which We had blessed.	7:137

The Covenant of Nations

The following Covenant makes the Muslims participants in earlier nations' Covenants, with some symbolic lessons from nature.

No.		The Verses of the Qur'ān	S.V.
1	The lst party	Lo! (O believers!) your Lord is...	7:54
2	The 2nd party and His signs	... Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He mounted the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the stars subservient by His command.	7:54
3	God's favours to bring life and authority for the nations	And He it is Who sendeth the winds as tidings heralding His mercy, till, when they bear a cloud heavy (with rain), We lead it to a dead land, and then	7:57

		cause water to descend thereon and thereby bring forth fruits of every kind. Thus bring We forth the dead. Haply ye may remember.	
4	Symbolic lesson about various people	As for the good land, its vegetation cometh forth by permission of its Lord; while as for that which is bad, only evil cometh forth (from it).	7:58
5	List of Commandments	1) Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. 2) Lo! He loveth not aggressors. 3) Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof), 4) and call on Him in fear and hope.	7:55 7:56
6	Promises	Lo! the mercy of Allah is nigh unto the good (those who do good).	7:56

This Covenant is followed by seven Covenants which God offered to the various nations after having given them authority and *vicegerency (khilafah)* (v. 69, 74, 129);
«... but most of them were not true to their covenant.» (v. 102). The consequence of their rejection and not fulfilling God's Covenant are as follows:

a. Covenant of Noah

No.	The Articles	the Verses of the Qur'an	Surah-Verse.
1	The lst party	We sent Noah (of old) unto ...	7:59
2	The 2nd party	... his people, and he (Noah) said:	
3	List of Commandments	O my people; 1) Serve Allah 2) Ye have no other God save Him.	7:59
4	Warning	Lo! I fear for you the retribution of an Awful Day...	7:59
		Marvel ye that there should come unto you a Reminder from your Lord by means of a man among you, that he may warn you,	7:63
5	Promise	and that ye may keep from evil, and that haply ye may find mercy.	7:63

But the people of Noah denied him, so God saved him and those with him in the ship, and He drowned those who denied God's token. (v. 64). They were blind folk. And it was the consequence of following one's forefathers blindly.

b. The Covenant of Ad

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	Surah-Verse
1	The lst party	And (We sent)	7:65
2	The 2nd party	unto(the tribe of)'Ad their brother Hud.	7:65
3	List of Commandments	He said: O my people; 1) Serve Allah, 2) Ye have no other God save Him. 3) Will ye not ward off (evil)?	7:65
4	Warning	Marvel ye that there should come unto you a Reminder from your Lord by means of a man among you, that he may warn you?(See also verse 71)	7:69
5	God's favours	Remember how He made you viceroys after Noah's folk,[11] and gave you growth of stature. Remember (all) the bounties of your Lord,	7:69
6	Promises	That haply ye may be successful.	7:69

The people of 'Ad rejected this Covenant and said to Hud: «Hast thou come unto us that we should serve Allah alone, and forsake what our fathers worshipped?

Then bring upon us that wherewith thou threatenest us if thou art of the truthful:7:70»

God saved Hud and those with him by a mercy from Him, and He cut the root of those who denied God's revelations and were not believers (v. 72).

c. Covenant of the people of Thamud

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'ān	Surah-verse
1	The lst party	And (We sent)	7:73
2	The 2nd party	to (the people) of Thamud their brother Salih.	7:73
3	List of Commandments	He said: O my people; 1) Serve Allah. 2) Ye have no other God save Him. 3) A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo; this is the camel of Allah, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with hurt,	7:73
4	Warning	Lest painful torment seize you.	7:73
5	God's favours	And remember 1) how He made you viceroys after 'Ad 2) and gave you station	7:74

Madaina Salih to the North of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

d. Lesson from Lot's Nation

The lesson from Lot's nation is a lesson about the people who indulged in sin and crime *(mujrimin)* and immoderation in their passion *(musrifin)* as follows:

No.	*The Verses of the Qur'an*	Surah.Verse.
1.	And Lot; (Remember) when he said unto his folk: Will ye commit abomination such as no creature ever did before you?	7:80
2.	Lo; Ye come with lust unto men instead of women.	

Nay, but ye are wanton folk. 7:81

3. And the answer of his people was only that they said (one to another): Turn them out of your township.[13] pure. 7:82
4. And We rescued him and his household, save his wife, who was of those who stayed behind. 7:83
5. And We rained a rain upon them. See now the nature of the consequence for evil doers! 7:84

e. Covenant of Madyan (Midian)

The Covenant of Madyan is an example of the consequence of economic ruin *(khasirin)* and of cheating or short-changing in transactions, and the result of general mischief *(mufsidin),* as follows:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	S.V.
1	The 1st party	And (We sent)	7:85
2	The2nd party	unto Midian,their brother Shu'ayb.[14]	7:85
3	List of Commandments	He said: O my people; 1) Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. Lo; a clear proof hath come unto you from your Lord: so give full measure and full weight and wrong not mankind in their goods 3) and work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering thereof.That will	7:85

		be better for you, if ye are believers. 4) Lurk not on every road to threaten (wayfarers), and to turn away from Allah's path him who believeth in Him, and to seek not to make it crooked.	
4	God's favours	And remember, when ye were but few, how He did multiply you.	7:86
5	Lessons from the past	And see in nature of the consequence for the corrupters.	7:86
6	Warning	And if there is a party of you which believeth in that wherewith I have been sent, and there is a party which believeth not, then have patience until Allah judge between us.He is the best of all who deal in judgement.	7:87

The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said: Surely we will drive thee out, O Shu'eyb, and those who believe with thee, from our township, unless ye return to our religion. He said, Even though we hate it? 7:88
We should have invented a lie against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah hath rescued us

from it. It is not for us to return to it unless Allah should (so) will. Our Lord comprehendeth all things in knowledge. In Allah do we put our trust. Our Lord! Decide with truth between us and our folk, for Thou art the best of those who make decision. 7:89

But the chieftains of his people, Who were disbelieving, said: If ye follow Shu'eyb, then truly we shall be the losers. 7:9
So the earthquake seized them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling-place. 7:91
Those who denied Shu'eyb became as though they had not dwelt there. Those who denied Shu'eyb, they were the losers. 7:92
So he turned from them and said: O my people! I delivered my Lord's messages unto you and gave you good advice; then how can I sorrow for a people that rejected (truth)? 7:93

f. General Lessons from the Past

The general lessons from the past are given as an introduction to the story of Pharaoh and Moses.

God's law rules for transfer of power

No.	*The Verses of the Qur'an*	Surah.Verse.
1.	And we sent no prophet unto any township but We did afflict its folk with tribulation and adversity that haply they might grow humble.	7:94
2.	Then changed We the evil plight for good, till they grew affluent and said: Tribulation and distress did touch our fathers. Then We seized them unawares, when they perceived not.	7:95
3.	And if the people of the townships had believed and	

kept from evil, surely We should have opened from them blessings from the sky and from the earth.But (unto every messenger) they gave the lie, and so We seized them on account of what they used to earn. 7:96

4. Are the people of the townships then secure from the coming of Our wrath upon them as a night-raid while they sleep? 7:97
5. Or are the people of the townships then secure from the coming of Our wrath upon them in the daytime while they play? 7:98
6. Are they then secure from Allah's scheme? None deemeth himself secure from Allah's scheme save folk that perish. 7:99
7. Is it not an indication to those who inherit the land after its people (who thus reaped the consequence of evil - doing) that, if We will, We can smite them for their hearts so that they hear not? 7:100
8. Such were the townships. We relate some tidings of them unto thee (Muhammad). Their messengers verily came into them with clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty), but they could not believe because they had before denied. Thus doth Allah print upon the hearts of disbelievers (that they hear not). 7:101
9. We found no (loyalty to any) covenant in most of them. Nay, most of them We found wrong-doers. 7:102

We will see these rules in the story of Pharaoh's people.

g. Covenant with Pharaoh

After the Covenants which God offered to the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and Madyan, God sent the following Covenant to Pharaoh and his chiefs:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	Surah Verse
1.	The lst party	Then, after them, We sent Moses with our token unto	7:103
2	The 2nd party	Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they repelled them. Now, see the nature of the consequence for the corrupters;	7:103
3	Identification of the Mediator	Moses said: O Pharaoh; Lo; I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds,	7:104
		Approved upon condition that I speak concerning Allah nothing but the truth.	7:105
4	List of Commandments	I come unto you (Lords of Egypt) with a clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with me.	7:105
5	God's Signs	(Pharaoh) said: If thou cometh with a token, then produce it, if thou art of those who speak the truth.	7:106

Then he flung down his staff and lo; it was a serpent manifest; 7:107

And he drew forth his hand (from his bosom), and lo; it was white for the beholders. 7:108

The following verses (109-133) show that Pharaoh refused this Covenant and punished those who believed in God. God punished the people of Pharaoh with hard years and failure of crops, that they might receive admonition. They said: «We sahll never believe in you.» God sent plagues on them: Wholesale death, locusts, lice, frogs and blood; but they were steeped in arrogance. Every time the penalty fell on them, they made a Covenant with Moses as follows:

No.	The Verses of the Qur'an	*S.V.*
1.	And when the terror fell on them they cried: O Moses! Pray for us unto thy Lord, because He hath a covenant with thee. If thou removest the terror from us we verily will trust thee and will let the Children of Israel go with thee.	7:134
2.	But when We did remove from them the terror for a term which they must reach, behold They broke their Covenant.	7:135
3.	Therefore We took retribution from them, and We drowned them in the sea: because they denied Our revelations and were heedless of them.	7:136
4.	And We caused the folk who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western part there of which We had blessed. And the fair word of	

the Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance; and We annihilated (all) that Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived. 7:137

verse 189 of this surah considers the nature of a man who makes a Covenant with God in time of hardship, but afterwards forgets. It is comparable with verse 175 concerning the Covenant of men and women in the hardship of birth.[15]

h. Covenant of Moses' People

After the people of Moses were rescued from Pharaoh's people, noses went up to the place appointed by God. And his Lord addressed him and He ordained laws for him in the tablets in all matters, both commanding and explaining all things, as a Covenant between God and the people of Israel as follows:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'ān	S.V.
1	The lst party	He (God) said:	7:144
2	The 2nd party	O Moses;	7:144
3	God's favours	I have preferred thee above mankind by My messages and by My speaking (unto thee).	7:144
4	List of Commandments	1) So hold that which I have given thee,	7:144

		2) and be among the thankful(*shakirin*).	7:144
		3) And We wrote for him, upon the tablets, the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things,...	7:145
		4) Take the better (course made clear) therein.	7:145
5	Warning	I shall show thee the abode of evil- livers. I shall turn away from My revelations those who magnify themselves wrongfully in the earth, and if they see each token believe it not, and if they see the way of righteousness choose it not for (their) way, and if they see the way of error choose it for (their) way. That is because the they deny Our revelations and are used to disregard them.	7:145 7:146

And the folk of Moses, after (he had left them), chose a calf (for worship), (made) out of their ornaments, of saffron hue, which gave a lowing sound. Saw they not that it spoke not unto them nor guided them to any way? They chose it, and became wrong-doers.

7:148

> And when they feared the consequences thereof and saw that they had gone astray, they said: Unless our Lord have mercy on us and forgive us, we verily are of the lost. 7:149

This is an example of the general and symbolic meaning of the story of Adam and Eve (v. 22-23). In both stories God examines the people, but they forget God's guidance and follow the path of Satan and become wrong-doers. And when they saw that they had gone astray both said: «Our Lord; If thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, sruely we are of the lost.» After the realization of the results of disobedience, they felt regret and returned to God and God turned to them and gave them guidance and made a new Covenant for the Children of Adam and the Children of Israel. We saw that the Covenant for the future of the Children of Israel included all People of the Book (the Old and New Testament) in the times of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.

5. *The New Covenant for the People of the Book*

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'ān	S.V.
1	The lst party	Lo; We (people of the Book) have turned unto...	7:156
2	The 2nd party	... Thee (God).	7:156
3	Warning	He (God) said: I smite with My punishment whom I will,	7:156

4	Promises	and My mercy embraceth all things, therefore I shall ordain it for:	7:156
5	List of Conditions	a) those who ward off (evil)	7:156
		b) and pay the poor-due,	
		c) and those who believe Our revelations;	
		d) Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah[16] and the Gospel[17] (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.	7:157
		e) Then those who believe in him,	
		f) and honour him,	
		g) and help him,	
		h) and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful.	

Identification of the Last Messenger

The following verse (158) acknowledges that the *Messenger of the last Covenant is not for any particular race or tribe, as were the Messengers of the Old Testament; rather he is for all mankind;* «*Say (O Muhammad): O* mankind; I am the messenger of Allah *to you all.*» The last Covenant is between *God and man* as such «And God to whom belongeth the dominion of *the heavens and the earth (not to any person such as Pharaoh, or any particular nation).* And there is no authority other than God. It is He that giveth both life and death [to the pepole and nations].[18] So believe in God and His Apostle, the unlettered prophet, who [you can be sure that he did not bring from himself but rather] believeth in God and His words [i.e. either the Old or New Testaments or Qur'ān], and follow him that you may be guided.»

6. The Consequence of the Breaking of God's Covenant

Verses 159 to 170 points to the consequence of breaking God's Covenant by the people of Moses, when God tried them.

First of all God excludes some of them and says: «There is a section of the people of Moses who guide and do justice in the light of truth.» (159). Yet, many of them did not keep their Covenant, for instance:

No.	The Articles	The Verses of the Qur'an	S.V.
1	The lst party	We (God) divided	7:160
2	The 2nd party	them (Jews) into twelve tribes, nations;	7:160
3	God's favours	1) and We inspired Moses, when his people asked him for water, saying: Smite with thy staff the rock; And there gushed forth therefrom twelve springs, so that each tribe knew their drinking place. 2) And we caused the white cloud to overshadow them 3)and sent down for them the manna 4) and the quails (saying): Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you. They wronged Us not, but they were wont to wrong themselves.	7:160
4	List of Commandments	And when it was said unto them: Dwell in this township and eat therefrom whence ye will, and say «Repentance,»[19] and enter the gate prostrate;	7:161

5	Promises	1) We shall forgive you your sins;	7:161
		2) We shall increase (reward) for the right doers.	

But those of them who did wrong changed the word which had been told them for another saying, and we sent down upon them wrath from heaven for their wrongdoing. 7:162

Ask them (O Muhammad) of the township that was by the sea, how they did break the sabbath, how their big fish came unto them visibly upon their sabbath day and on a day when they did not keep sabbath came they not unto them. Thus did We try them for that they were evil-livers. 7:163

7. Covenant for the New Generation

Verse n. 169 gives an important lesson from the new generation of Israel's children. This lesson shows how a nation changed after a time: «They inherited the Book, but they chose the vanities of this world (and they followed external sense and literal meaning) saying (for excuse): (Everything) will be forgiven us, (even so), if similar vanities come their way, they would (again) seize them (and forgetting the divine Covenant and ascribing to God that which is not true).»

Then God reminds them of the Covenant of the Book (*mithaq al- kitab*) and the Covenant of the Mount briefly as follows:

a. Covenant of the Scripture

> And a generation hath succeeded them who inherited the Scriptures. They grasp the goods of this low life (as the price of evil- doing) and say: It will be forgiven us. And if there came to them, (again) the offer of the like, they would accept it (and would sin again). Hath not the covenant of the Scripture been taken of their behalf that they should not speak aught concerning Allah save the truth? And they have studied that which is therein. And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who ward off (evil). Have ye then no sense? 7:169

b. Covenant of the nount

> And when We shook the Mount above them as it were a covering, and they supposed that it was going to fall upon them (and We said): Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that ye may ward off (evil). 7:171

8. God's Covenant with the Nature of Man

The following verses, 172- 175 concern the eternal Covenant between God and man's nature as such. The matter was mentioned in this surah in order to answer the questions of 1)those who heard the Covenants but did not believe in God, 2) and some who believed in God, but did not consider it; so they may think that they have no responsibility, 3) and some who are heedless (*ghafilin*), 4) and many imitators who just follow their fathers,

claiming that their fathers were neglectful and say: «Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, and we are (their) descendants after them: wilt Thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?» (Qur'ān, 7:173)

The reply is that God provides the intellect for the children of Adam and shows them their creation which is the best guide to God, for He is man's *rabb,* namely, He creates and educates us. So, man accepted indirectly the Covenant of God that He be his *rabb.*[20]

> *The Verses of the Qur'ān.*
> And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord (*Rabb*)? They said: Yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo; of this we were unaware; 7:172
> Or lest ye should say: (It is) only (that) our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were (their) seed after them. Wilt Thou destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did? 7:173
> Thus We detail our revelations, that haply they may return. 7:174

This Covenant received different interpretations from various Muslim groups and commentators. We have reviewed these in chapter 2, section «The Children of Adam.»[21]

The following verses express the concept of the *ghafilin* (heedless): 179, *Rabb*'s (God's) guidance: 178, 180- 181, and *shirk* (association): 183- 198.[22]

9. *The Covenant of a Man in Hardship*

Then verses 189- 190 show symbolically how the nature of men and women is to shift away from the unity of God to idolatry.[23]

10. *Ten Commandments for God's Guidance and His Vicegenerency*

Finally, surah 7 finishes by offering a series of injunctions which summarize the things man must undertake in fulfilling his part of the Covenant.

No.	The Verses of the Qur'an	Surah.Verse.
1	Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them. And leave the company of those who blaspheme His names. They will be requited what they do.	7:180
2	Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.	7:199
3	And if a slander from the devil wound thee, then seek refuge in Allah. Lo; He is Hearer, Knower.	7:200
4	Lo; those who ward off (evil), when a glamour from the devil troubleth them, they do but remember (Allah's guidance) and behold them seers;	7:201

5	Their brethren plunge them further into error and cease not.	7:202
6	And when thou bringest not a verse for them they say: Why hast thou not chosen it? Say: I follow only that which is inspired in me from my Lord. This (Qur'ān) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe.	7:203
7	And when the Qur'ān is recited, give ear to it and pay heed, that ye may obtain mercy.	
8	And do thou (O Muhammad)remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and with awe, below the breath, at morn and evening.	7:205
9	And be thou not of the neglectful.	7:205
10	Lo; those who are with thy Lord are not too proud to do Him service, but they praise Him and adore Him.	7:206

Thus, we see that the entire surah follows a consistent theme, progressively unfolding the Qur'anic doctrine of Covenant from various angles, always in a coherent succession. This single-minded development of the surah's main theme is completed by a «summary» of man's duty, in his Covenant with God.

Formula

1. The only passages to be excepted are verses 158-160, and 164-171, the former of these passages evidently belongs to Medina. See G. Sale & E.M. Wherry, Commentary on the Qur'ān, vol. 2, P. 201.
2. For a comparison between Sura 6 and Sura 7 see M. Shaltut, *Tafsir al-Qur'ān* al-Karim, PP. 379-385.
3. For the symbolic meaning of Adam's story in the Qur'ān, see above, PP. 21-22
4. This symbolic story shows that expulsion from the Garden (i.e.,*Jannah)*and from a life of bliss is the consequence of disobeying the commandments of God's Covenant. Man forgets his Covenant and comes near the tree and disobeys his Lord, and allows himself to be seduced (Qur'ān, 20:121) and led out of the Garden *(Jannah)* (Qur' ān, 7:20-25).
5. The tree in this sura symbolizes Satan for: 1) it is mentioned after his quality, 2) transgression *(zulm)* is mentioned as the result of the tree. As we will see the qualities of the *zalimin* are the same as this Satanic quality.
6. This passage (v. 27-33) was revealed to reprove an immodest custom of the pagan Arabs, who used to encompass the Ka'bah naked, because clothes, they said, were the signs of their disobedience to God. The Sunnah orders that when a man goes to prayers he should put on his best apparel. Sale, *The Koran,* P. 107; c.f. Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil,* P. 202.
7. We have quoted the translation of this verse from Yusuf 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'an,* P. 347, for it is closer to the Qur'ān than Pickthall's translation.
8. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-'Azim* (Cairo: N.P., 1975), vol. 1, P. 66.
9. The story of Noah is mentioned in greater detail in Sura 11:25-49.
10. The story of Hud and his people is mentioned more specifically in Surah 26:123-140, and 46:21-26.
11. «This story belongs to Arabian tradition. Their epynomous ancestor 'Ad was fourth in generation from Noah, having been a son of 'Aus, the son of Aram, the son of Sam, in Southern Arabia, extending from 'Uman at the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Ha*dh*ramaut and Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The tomb of the Prophet Hud is still traditonally shown in Ha*dh*ramaut.» See A. Yusuf 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān,* P. 358, n. 1040; c.f. D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, *Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled.*» (Leiden: E.J. Brill, Ltd., 1932), P. 158 f.
12. The people of Thamud were the successors to the culture and civilization of the 'Ad people. They were cousins to the 'Ad, apparently a younger branch of the same race.
13. The Arabic word *Qaryah* means originally a settled community, polity or civilization.

14. Identified with Jethro.
15. See above, PP. 24-26.
16. Deut., xviii, 15.
17. John, xiv, 16.
18. This verse can be related to verse 34: «And every nation hath its term...» and verses 57-58. «And it is He Who sendeth the wind as tidings heralding His mercy, till, when they bear a cloud heavy, We lead it to a dead land, and then cause water to descend thereon and thereby bring froth fruits of every kind. Thus bring we forth the dead. Haply ye may remember.»
19. According to a tradition of the Prophet *hittatun* is a word implying submission to Allah and repentance. The evil- doers changed it for a word of rebellion, i.e., they were disobedient.
20. The term *rabb* means «master,» cherisher, and «sustainer.» According to Raghib al- Isfahani, *rabb* means «education and creation, making everything perfect gradually, see *Mufradat,* p. 182; see also above, pp. 110-120
21. See above, pp. 110-120
22. See above, pp. 119-120
23. See above, pp. 120-123

CONCLUSION

The Qur'ānic concept of Covenant symbolizes that relationship between God and man or nations whereby man or nations become His vicegerents on the earth, through obedience are able to gain the advantage of God's promises and favours.

The concept of Covenant is not only one of the key ideas of the Qur'ān, but may be seen also as one of the keys to the unity of the verses in the Qur'ānic Surahs, and we can say that much of the Qur'ān consists of Covenant or Covenant - articles.

The Covenant in the Qur'ān usually contains a definite series of articles:

1. The lst party to the Covenant (Allah).
2. The 2nd party to the Covenant (Adam, children of Adam, the prophets, the nations, the Children of Israel, Christians, learned men, the faïthful men, the faithful women, the family).
3. Remembrance of God's favours.
4. List of commandments or conditions of the Covenant.
5. Promises for those who fulfil the Covenant.
6. Warnings for those who break the Covenant.
7. Affirmation and witness.

8. Oaths by God's signs and favours.
9. Signs of the Covenant.
10. Lessons from the past.

Some short surahs do not mention all the above articles of the Covenant. Some of them, such as Surahs 1, 109, 112, 113, and 114 are witness and formula statements. But usually each surah speaks about some articles of the Covenant specifically and points to the other articles of the Covenant briefly. For example, surah 57 gives more attention to the attributes of God, the lst party to the Covenant; while surah 29 is more concerned with His signs and surah 55 with His favours. Surah 6 concerns the nations and Surah 7 gives more lessons from past nations; and finally Surah 2 gives a list of commandments. It is interesting that the last revealed surah of the Qur'ān (Surah 5) contains all the articles of the Divine Covenant.

Our analysis of Surah 7 by the above Covenant formula shows that the verses 1-10 are a general Covenant between God and the Muslim believers; the following verses are descriptions of its articles, especially lessons from past nations and consequences of their breaking God's Covenant, and finally ten Commandments for God's guidance and His vicegerency.

The lessons which are mentioned in Surah 7 are related in connection with the different Covenants between God and various nations to make them inheritors of the earth and superior in power and culture to other nations. But most of them did not keep their Covenant (v.s. 94- 102). For this reason God punished them and took away His favours and blessings, removed their power, and gave these to other nations.

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